

STUDENT AND COUNSELOR PERCEPTIONS OF A DISCIPLINARY
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM'S EFFECTIVENESS

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Research reveals that disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) are growing at an alarming rate. What are schools doing to ensure success for those students who are placed in a DAEP? In this descriptive qualitative research study, I examined how DAEPs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. In order to achieve this overall objective, the following research questions framed this study RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program? RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program? RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism? RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat student assignments to DAEP?

Participants were 12 North Texas secondary school students with multiple assignments to DAEPs and 12 North Texas secondary counselors who provide emotional and behavioral supports to these students. The findings indicate there is a high need for the implementation of transitional supports, a high need for consistent and targeted counselor support and resources, a high need to change student behavior, a high need to build positive relationships, and a high need to address the environmental (social) factors that influence behavior.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the past, schools have dealt with troubled kids by suspending them to the streets. The out-of-sight, out-of-mind philosophy resulted in unsupervised youth in the community during school hours (Carpenter-Abey, Salloum, & Aeby, 2001). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 was enacted in 2002 requiring all students be afforded equal protection and opportunities for an equitable education in environments that are safe and academically sound (Powell, 2003). School administrators supported the NCLB efforts by utilizing alternative education programs for students with discipline problems (Powell, 2003).

Disciplinary alternative education programs serve as an alternative education setting for students who are temporarily removed from the traditional instructional setting for disciplinary reasons (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2007). In addition, it should be noted disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) vary from an academic alternative education program. DAEPs involve disciplinary infractions while academic alternative education programs are for students in need of academic support. However, according to the Texas Education Agency (2007), academic alternative school and DAEPs are similar in that both involve an alternative setting for at-risk students. Enrollment in a non-disciplinary alternative program is by choice of the student rather than being assigned by school personnel. Alternative programs are settings that are smaller than the traditional classroom, they integrate hands-on activities, and they focus on managing student behavior. They are considered by some to be last chance schools. Although students may attend alternative schools for various reasons, five of the 10 most frequently cited criteria for admission to these programs are discipline related (Foley & Pang, 2006). According to Chapter 103 of the Texas Education Agency's (2010a) Commissioner's

Rules for Safe Schools, students may be assigned to the district's DAEP for either discretionary or mandatory reasons as determined by local or state policy. The student's length of placement to a DAEP will be determined by their school administrator. The majority of placements to DAEP range from 30 to 180 school days. The extended time away from the regular educational setting may play a factor in determining the outcome of the student's success, either in a positive or negative manner.

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), reauthorizing the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2016). According to the NASP, the ESSA allows a significant amount of decision-making on education policy to the state and the local districts to improve school and student outcomes. The ESSA stresses the integration of school climate and safety into school improvement efforts. Feeling safe and supported are necessary conditions for students to learn and achieve. All school leaders, including DAEP leaders, need to ensure that teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn in a safe environment. Staff, students, and community members connected to the educational system need to have a clear understanding of academic and behavioral expectations.

Additionally, school safety and crisis teams should be qualified to address the continuum of prevention, planning, response, and recovery in regard to school safety and student behavior, using constant positive behavior, risk assessment, safety, and mental health services. Title 4, Part A of the ESSA (2015) provides funding to states and districts nationwide for activities to support safe and healthy student activities. Out of the total \$1.6 billion authorized for Title 4

Part A, the bill requires states to spend 20% on safe and healthy student activities, including but not limited to:

- Drug and violence provisions
- School based mental health services
- Bullying and harassment prevention
- Development of relations building skills
- Mentoring and school counseling
- Drop-out prevention programs
- Suicide prevention
- Class room management
- Crisis management
- Conflict resolution
- Plans to reduce exclusionary practices
- Implementation of positive behavioral intervention supports to improve school conditions for learning. (Dignity in Schools, 2016, Para. 4)

“These funding streams can be used to support alternatives to policing that create safety while getting to root causes rather than criminalizing student behavior” (Dignity in Schools, 2016, Para. 4).

Statement of the Problem

The world of educating children is changing at a dramatic rate and it is the educational system’s responsibility to leave no child behind. Each child has the right to an extraordinary education, regardless of location. The location of services should not play a factor. The supports that are given pre-DAEP through post-DAEP have a major impact on whether the student

succeeds (graduates) or fails (drops out or becomes a product of the school-to-prison pipeline). It becomes the role of academic professionals to ensure parameters are set in place to ensure success for all students, in all school systems, regardless of location.

Unfortunately, not all students are being successful after they leave the DAEP. Some of the students are not learning behavioral strategies that they can transfer and utilize when they return back to their home campus after serving a DAEP placement. The reassignment for students back to DAEP indicates the ineffectiveness of DAEP; and thus, revolving door of DAEPs is of high concern. The Texas Education Agency reports the number of DAEP assignments and the number of DAEP students (Carpenter-Abey et al., 2001). According to the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) 2009 DAEP update, one in three students in DAEP will be re-assigned to DAEP in the same year (Cortez & Cortez, 2009). In 2015, the Texas Education Agency reported 85,450 students accounted for the 109,638 assignments to DAEP in Texas. An investigation into the reasons for DAEP ineffectiveness is clearly needed to pin point reasons for the program's ineffectiveness, so that district leaders can take progressive measures to assist all students, in hopes of reducing recidivism rates.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study utilized a three-prong approach combining social learning theory (SLT), restorative justice, and positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS) to identify effective practices in disciplinary alternative education programs to reduce the recidivism rate among troubled youth. The absence of one of the conceptual framework components will reduce the effectiveness of the overall conceptual framework. The combination of the three prongs will be more effective in providing supports for DAEP students

than if each component was used alone. Therefore, it becomes vital that the use of all three components be intentional and purposeful.

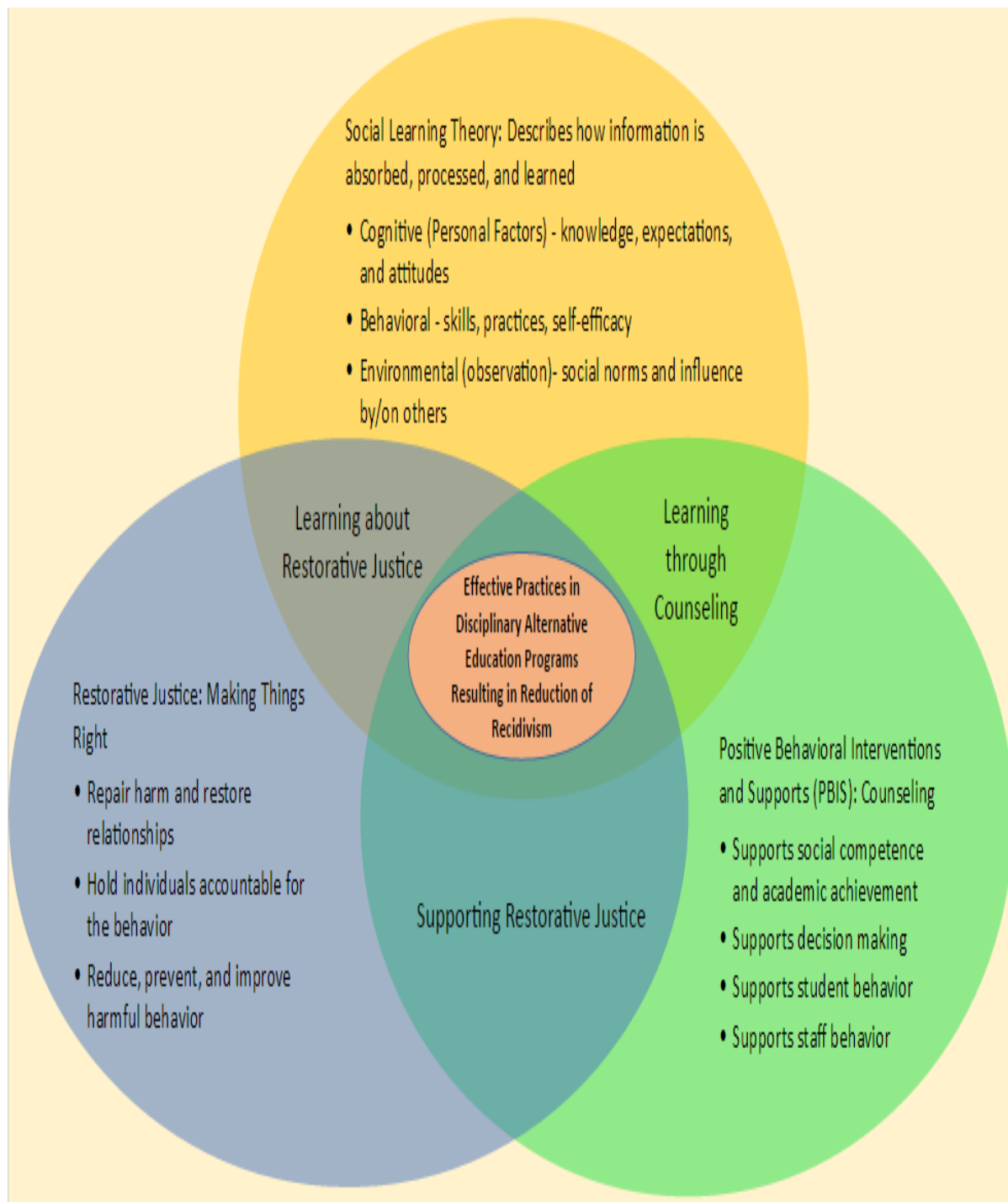


Figure 1. Conceptual framework. A combination of Bandura’s (1971) social learning theory, as described by Bandura (1971), restorative justice, as described by Mullet (2014); and positive behavioral intervention supports, as described by Simonsen and Sugai (2013), resulting in effective practices in disciplinary alternative education programs.

I created this conceptual framework based on Freeman's (2012) suggestion of using social and emotional learning, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports because they are evidence-based, cost effective approaches shown to reduce the number of DAEP placements, and they improve student behavior and academic success. This conceptual framework was used as a lens in this study to gain insight from students that have had multiple placements to a DAEP and from counselors that have worked with students that have attended a DAEP. The methodology and instruments used in this study were intentional in terms of identifying the use, or lack of use, of any of the three components of the conceptual framework and the effects they have on DAEP effectiveness and the overall effect it has on reducing the recidivism rate. Figure 1 represents the conceptual framework in visual form.

Social learning theory describes how information is absorbed, processed, and learned by an individual (Bandura, 1971). Cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors all have a part in how learning and behavior occurs (Bandura, 1971). Restorative justice involves making things right. The goals of restorative justice are to repair harm and restore relationships, hold individuals accountable for their behavior, and to reduce, prevent, and improve harmful behavior (Mullet, 2014). Positive behavioral intervention supports is a counseling model that supports social competence and academic achievement, decision making, student behavior, and staff behavior (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. The review

of literature regarding the effectiveness of DAEP revealed that little educational research had been conducted on effective methods to reduce the recidivism rate of disciplinary alternative education programs.

Research Questions

This qualitative research study explored the perceptions of a DAEP's effectiveness through the eyes of students that have had multiple assignments to DAEPs. Also explored were the perceptions of a DAEP's effectiveness through the eyes of counselors that serve students that have had multiple assignments to DAEPs. The following research questions were used to guide the current study:

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism?

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat student assignments to DAEP?

The research questions were answered through the utilization of student based semi-structured individual interviews, a student photovoice project, and two secondary level counselor focus group interviews in Sunrise ISD in the North Texas area. A full description of the methodology for this study is further explained in Chapter 3. The findings of this research are intended to assist educational leaders in increasing the effectiveness of DAEPs in hopes of reducing the recidivism rates on their campus.

Significance of the Study

The reason for this research was to find effective methods to raise the levels of success for students that attend DAEP, in order to reduce future re-assignments to DAEP. Research has shown that students that are removed from school as a punishment often present a reduction in commitment to learning, a decrease in academic achievement, and an increase in negative attitudes, which then leads to increased dropout rates (González, 2012; Mullet, 2014). My hope, as a principal of a DAEP, was to gather data that provides me with insight on how to implement effective strategies to create and sustain a learning environment that promotes behavioral and academic growth for students on my own campus. In addition, I plan to share my findings with other educational leaders, so they can also increase DAEP effectiveness in their district.

The placement of students at DAEPs is to allow an environment that promotes safety and learning at the home campus. Discipline alternative education programs should be designed to promote a holistic approach for student success, so the student can continue the success when they return to their home campus. With the findings of this study, I aim to provide district and/or campus leaders with useful information about the impact of DAEPs and how those environments might be improved.

Delimitations

Using this descriptive qualitative research study, I focused on students enrolled in, and counselors who work at, a DAEP at Sunrise ISD in the North Texas area. Participants in this study self-selected pseudonyms and I assigned a pseudonym for the school district to ensure anonymity. Data collection for this descriptive qualitative research study was during the fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic school year.

Data were collected through homogenous purposive sampling of 12 secondary school students who have multiple discretionary assignments to DAEPs. Students must have had prior assignments to DAEPs and be currently assigned to a DAEP for at least 30 days or more. Data was also collected through homogenous purposive sampling of 12 secondary counselors who provide emotional and behavioral supports to students that are assigned to DAEPs.

Assumptions

In this qualitative study, I relied on the perceptions of students enrolled in a DAEP in Sunrise ISD and counselors that work at secondary schools in Sunrise ISD in the North Texas area. The underlying assumption in this study was that students know best why they are assigned to disciplinary alternative schools. In addition, these same students will have some personal insight on what disciplinary alternative schools could do differently to assist students from having future placements to these schools. Another underlying assumption in this study is counselors who have worked with students, who have had multiple assignments to a disciplinary alternative school, will have insight to the DAEPs and to the students they serve. Counselors should be able to provide valuable feedback on what disciplinary alternative schools could do differently to assist students from having future placements to these schools.

Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions clarify meaning of the key terms in the study:

- Discipline alternative education program. An alternate school setting for students temporarily removed from their home campus for either violating school code of conduct or certain criminal acts (Texas Education Code §37.008, 2017)

- Positive behavioral interventions and supports. An evidence-based, data-driven approach in schools proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a sense of safety, improve attendance rates, and support improved academic outcomes (Brownstein, 2009).
- Recidivism. A tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior (Merriam-Webster, 2015).
- Restorative justice. A responsive approach that allows for the understanding of what happened, listening to those affected, and responding to the harm that was done in hopes of sustaining safe schools through restitution, resolution, and reconciliation (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).
- Social learning theory. Behavior that is learned by observing others in a social environment (Bandura, 1971).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters, beginning with Chapter 1, the introduction to the study. In Chapter 2, I expand on the background and development of discipline alternative education programs and provide further proof for the need of this qualitative research study. Chapter 3 is a discussion of the methodology used to screen participants, along with a description of the process used to identify the students and counselors utilized in this research study. Chapter 3 also includes the analysis of the study. Chapter 4 includes the findings resulting from this study. Chapter 5 concludes the research with a discussion of the findings, summary, conclusion, and further recommendations from this study. The literature review served as a basis for the analysis in Chapter 5.

Summary

DAEPs are designed to provide an educational placement for students to promote success, so that when a student return to their home campus they will be prepared to make sound decisions, take responsibility for their actions, set goals, and achieve, both behaviorally and academically. In this chapter, I provided the rationale and need for this qualitative research study and highlighted the need for effective practices in the DAEP setting in order to increase success and reduce recidivism. I provide a comprehensive literature review in Chapter 2 of what DAEPs are, the concerns for students assigned to DAEPs, and suggested interventions that could be used in DAEPs.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Texas 74th Legislature passed the Safe Schools Act in 1995 that mandated all school districts establish disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) (Levin, 2005; Texas Education Agency, 2007). Texas began implementing DAEPs in the 1996-1997 school year. DAEP is an alternate school setting for students that are temporarily removed for either violating school code of conduct or certain criminal acts, as noted in Texas Education Code §37.008 (2017). Chapter 37 maintains each DAEP must meet the educational and behavioral needs of the students it serves, but leaves the program design and content to district leaders' discretion. The stipulation is the alternate setting must be separate from the regular setting if on the same campus or it may be housed at a different location. Chapter 37 also states students removed from the regular educational setting must not have an interruption of their education (Reyes, 2001). This is a way to ensure the education of many is not harmed by the behavior of a few.

Discipline Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs)

The intent of DAEPs is to promote safer schools, provide a place for students to get intensive social support, allow students to function better in the regular setting, and prevent school dropout (Carpenter-Aeby et al., 2001). Students are assigned to DAEPs in the hopes of correcting or managing the disruptive behavior (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). The purpose of DAEP is to provide a temporary placement for misbehavior, usually after suspensions and other techniques have been exhausted.

According to the Texas Education Code §37.008 (2017), the state only requires that DAEPs focus on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline.

DAEP must also provide education and behavioral needs and counseling (Levin, 2005; Texas Education Agency, 2007). Chapter 37 also states DAEP be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom. In addition, it must meet the educational and behavioral needs, along with supervision and counseling. Teachers are required to be certified in accordance with Chapter 21 of the TEC, while also maintaining the rights to education of special education students (Levin, 2005; Texas Education Agency, 2007).

Chapter 103 of the Commissioner's Rules Concerning Safe Schools states the accountability for student performance will be placed on the home campus of the student, regardless of the length of the student's assignment at a DAEP (Texas Education Agency, 2010a). The student's graduation plan must not be altered while being assigned to a DAEP. In accordance with Texas Education Code §37.004 (2003), DAEP students that receive special education services shall be provided support in meeting the goals outlined in their individual education plan (IEP).

Funding of DAEPs

DAEPs usually represent one of the highest costs in school districts' discipline systems. The financial cost of exclusionary discipline consumes a significant share of the overall budgets of many Texas school districts (Freeman, 2012). These campuses typically have lower attendance rates, meaning the district is losing state reimbursement for average daily attendance for the days the students are absent. According to Freeman (2012), the lower attendance means the district loses a substantial amount of money from the state as part of its reimbursement for weighted average daily attendance. According to Texas Education Code §37.008 (2017), students removed to a disciplinary alternative education program are counted in computing the

average daily attendance of students for the district. Section §37.008 also states that school districts shall allocate to a disciplinary alternative education program the same expenditure per student attending the DAEPs (including federal, state, and local funds) which would be allocated to the student's school if the student were attending the student's regularly assigned education program.

The Legislative Budget Board estimates that Texas spent \$232 million on DAEP campuses for the 2008-2009 school year (Freeman, 2012). Texas schools are spending \$8,400 per student in the current school year, well under the national average of \$11,455 and low enough to put the state 49th in a ranking of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This equates to \$47 daily for students in a non-disciplinary setting. According to a 2012 Texas Appleseed report, on average, Texas districts are spending \$140 per student per day for students attending DAEP (Carreon, 2013a). Given this high cost, it is mandatory that Texas school administrators provide an appropriate level of educational programming to DAEP participants.

So where does funding come from? Students placed in a DAEP are classified as at risk of dropping out of school because they meet the requirements stated in Texas Education Code §37.006 (2011). Therefore, State Compensatory Education Funds are available for use. Under Texas Education Code §29.081 (2017), compensatory education is defined in law as programs and/or services designed to supplement the regular education program for students identified as at risk of dropping out of school. The purpose is to increase academic achievement and reduce the dropout rate of these students. The goal of state compensatory education is to reduce any disparity in performance on assessment instruments administered under Texas Education Code Subchapter B, Chapter 39 or disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other local education agency students (Texas Education

Code §29.081, 2017). However, there are some restrictions on the amounts that can be used. The TEC restricts the amount of State Compensatory Education funds a district may use to fund DAEP to 18% of the district's SCE Foundation School Program allotment (Texas Education Agency, 2010b).

Enrollment in DAEPs

DAEPs are not schools of choice for students. The school code of conduct must specify the circumstances of why a student may be assigned to a DAEP setting. In addition, the code must provide guidelines for length of stay at that setting.

The recommendation for DAEP is generated by the administrator of the home campus. Students may be placed in a DAEP on either a discretionary or mandatory basis. Discretionary placements occur when a student violates the student code of conduct and the decision to send a student to DAEP is determined by administration. Discretionary placements are subjective in nature. The number of violations of the school code of conduct needed to warrant a discretionary placement will vary from district to district and administrator to administrator. Students with discretionary placements typically have persistent misbehavior or are chronically disruptive. According to Booker and Mitchell (2011), the number of discretionary placements has risen over the years because “no attention has been given to the potential bias that may emerge from such a subjective practice” (p. 195). Districts set their own codes of conduct and have unlimited discretions to refer students to DAEP. According to the Texas Education Agency (2007), school administrators must assign mandatory placements when a student commits various offenses on or off campus. Some of the offenses include, but are not limited to: crimes

on campus, homicide, kidnapping, illegal trafficking of persons, sexual offenses, or certain assaults.

The Texas Education Agency (2016) State level annual disciplinary summary reported 90,181 students were assigned to DAEP during the 2015-2016 academic school year. Of those referrals to DAEP, 51,066 were discretionary placements, while the remaining 39,115 were mandatory placements.

According to reports gathered by Cortez and Cortez (2009), the number of students that were enrolled in DAEP in the 2005-2006 school was 105,530. This was a 35,000-student increase from the enrollment numbers of DAEP's inaugural year (1996) of 70,959 students. The total number of DAEP assignments, including multiple referrals for students, increased by 37.6%, with total statewide placements increasing from 99,391 in 1996 to 136,938 in 2005-06. About one-third of all DAEP referrals involve students who had a prior disciplinary-related referral in the same year.

In 2011, Texas had 87,553 students were removed to DAEP 112,580 times (Moll, 2012). This means that some of the students were reassigned to the alternative campus. Of those students that had multiple DAEP placements, 64% were discretionary, while the remaining 36% of the placements were mandatory. That raises the question of whether there were interventions put in place prior to sending the student for discretionary reasons. Reducing the discretionary referrals will allow school leaders to increase the quality of education for these students and cut down on DAEP cost.

Concerns about DAEP Placements

The word punishment is often connected with the word discipline. The role of school

discipline should be to stop student misbehavior, teach positive behavior, and increase healthier and more productive decision making (Mullet, 2014). However, typically, discipline is more punitive in nature. Punitive school discipline policies deprive students of educational opportunities (González, 2012). Mullet (2014) stated common practice in schools has been to use punitive measures that produce a sense of powerlessness and a negative attitude that allows for the misbehavior to continue. Exclusionary practices, such as DAEPs, will interfere with educational successes and continue a cycle of failure, and are not effective in reducing problematic behaviors (González, 2012). When dealing with discipline, the common practice has been to identify how disruptive the action is and how much punishment the student should get, which results in little understanding of the root cause of the misbehavior (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Mullet (2014) stated the “negative emotional response to punishment, anger, or resentment, distracts the wrongdoer from the effects of his or her wrongdoing, the harm done to others, and thus no possible empathetic connection exists to prompt moral reasoning and deter future harm” (p. 157).

Since 2012, it has been difficult to evaluate whether DAEP programs successfully educate or reform students due to the limited amount of data (Moll, 2012). Perhaps the most critical conclusion reported by the state auditor is the finding that data are insufficient to show if alternative education even works (Cortez & Montecel, 1999). What we do know is DAEP will remove disruptive students from the regular classroom, students, and teachers. The 2009 update states DAEPs do not work for kids, for schools, or for the state of Texas (Cortez & Cortez, 2009). According to the auditor’s report, the state has paid millions of dollars for alternative education programs that have not generated sufficient data to support that they have a positive effect on student achievement (Cortez & Montecel, 1999). Given the high costs associated with

DAEPs, districts should consider whether DAEPs are effectively modifying student behavior, since students continue to have disciplinary issues while in some alternative programs (Freeman, 2012).

Texas school districts are being asked to do more with less. In the 2011 Texas legislative session, the state cut \$5.4 billion out of the public education budget. With limited resources, school districts must be more strategic in directing those dollars to evidence-based programming linked to good student outcomes. Freeman (2012) stated alternative school leaders need to conduct an evaluation of their current student disciplinary data and disciplinary models to make thoughtful, necessary changes. Given the poor outcomes and high costs associated with exclusionary discipline, it is critical that school district leaders implement alternatives that result in better student outcomes. In a review of four major school districts' DAEPs, the Texas Legislative Budget Board identified the following concerns:

- Failing to staff DAEP with certified teachers, failing to provide a learning environment equal to the mainstream campus
- Inadequate training for the DAEP teachers
- Insufficient communication between the DAEP
- The home campus, and the absence of transitional programs upon return to the home campus (Carreon, 2013b)

These failures heighten repeat misbehavior, leading to future life-altering consequences, such as recidivism, dropouts, and potentially the prison systems.

In 1999, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) conducted a comprehensive analysis of DAEPs in Texas (Cortez & Cortez, 2008). In this initial study, they reported DAEPs were growing rapidly, the curriculum was subpar when compared to those on a regular campus, minorities and special education students were over identified, and there was little communication between the home campus and DAEPs (Cortez & Cortez, 2008). A follow-

up analysis was conducted ten years later. In that analysis, Cortez and Cortez (2008) found the number of students referred to DAEP rose by 93%. This increase raised concerns about the effectiveness of the programs to improve student discipline. Cortez and Cortez also stated if one of the purposes of the DAEP setting was to discourage students from violating school rules, the number of referrals should be declining.

DAEP students also perform substantially lower on state exams. Texas Education Agency (2011) reports revealed a substantially lower score on the 2011 TAKS test for students that attended a DAEP campus. However, it is unclear whether the lower scores were due to the students being assigned to DAEP. According to Moll (2012), the average student placement to DAEP is 34 days. This limited time makes it difficult to truly determine whether the DAEP placement has an adverse effect on state testing performance. Pre- and post-tests are required for students that have an excess of 90 days assigned to DAEP, but not for those with less time.

Recidivism (2015) is defined as a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior. The revolving door of DAEPs is of high concern. The reassignment for students to DAEP indicates the ineffectiveness of DAEP. However, little information is available regarding the recidivism rate of students enrolled in DAEP. The Texas Education Agency (2016) reported the number of DAEP assignments and the number of DAEP students. The discrepancy between these two numbers indicates that some of the students had repeat assignments. According to a 2009 DAEP update by IDRA, 1:3 students in DAEP will be re-assigned to DAEP in the same year (Cortez & Cortez, 2009).

In 2012, the Texas Education Agency reported 85,450 students accounted for the 109,638 assignments to DAEP in Texas. Table 1 shows the number of DAEP students assigned to a DAEP, by frequency. These data show, on average, from school years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015,

approximately 19% of students returned to a DAEP multiple times. This being said, why do our DAEP campuses have students that return? An investigation into the effectiveness of DAEPs is clearly needed. Are the schools at fault? Are students at fault?

Table 1

Texas Number of DAEP Assignments, By Frequency of Student Assignments

School Year	# of Time Assigned to DAEP			
	1	2	3	4+
2012 - 2013	65,782	12,026	2,468	828
2013 - 2014	62,935	11,365	2,270	763
2014 - 2015	61,605	10,904	2,126	573

Note. Texas Education Agency (2016).

Students that are removed from school as a punishment often present a reduction in commitment to learning, a decrease in academic achievement, and an increase in negative attitudes, which then leads to increased dropout rates (González, 2012; Mullet, 2014). DAEP students are more likely to struggle academically because of disciplinary reasons. Students in DAEP are at a great risk of dropping out due to falling behind their peers academically (Brownstein, 2009). Levin (2005) noted DAEP students have a drop-out rate over twice the rate for students state-wide.

Approximately one-third of all high school students in the United States fail to graduate (Azzam, 2007). Some of the reasons students drop out of school are: boredom, missed too many days and cannot catch up, friends with those that are uninterested, or too much freedom and are failing classes. According to McCall (2003), the main factors that lead students to dropping out include a lack of positive relationships with school personnel, enrolling in an alternative setting early in their schooling, and students that came from single family homes. When surveyed on why they dropped out, most students said they felt teachers did not care about them or they felt

they were labeled as troubled students. Many of the students felt there was nothing the school could have done to keep them in school. About half of these students also said they were not adequately prepared in their early education years. Another aspect was the lack of parental support in their child's life.

Schools and DAEP can team up to play a bigger role in prevention of dropouts. Texas identified that the prevention of dropouts is one of the educational system's top goals. Texas Education Agency (2018) requires districts submit a leaver report to provide dropout rates and to develop a comprehensive prevention plan to prevent students from dropping out.

Conley (2007) stated DAEP high schools are not adequately preparing students for college. Reason for this failure is the gap between high school preparedness and college expectations. There is a need to align high school curriculum and instruction with college expectations, develop high quality syllabi in all courses, implement senior seminars, and add missing content to high school courses. There is a need to align high school coursework with the college success standards in order to serve the increased numbers of students entering post-secondary education better. According to Azzam (2007), educators can make school more engaging, improve instructional support, improve school culture, ensure students have an adult role model in the school, and improve communication with parents.

Best Practices in DAEP Settings

Best practices in the regular education setting should also be used in a DAEP setting. The emphasis on best practices must also occur in the DAEP setting to ensure student success. Ultimately, these practices are to raise student achievement and change student behavior, providing a recipe for student success.

McCreight (1999) conducted a statewide survey of Texas school superintendents designed to gather data on program characteristics and best practices of DAEPs. The study results revealed successful DAEP programs include a cohesiveness of the alternative and regular programs. These successful programs have a clear mission and vision. Students have the opportunity to meet high expectations while using a variety of instructional strategies that meet their needs. Class size is minimal, usually 15 students or less. The curriculum is based on functional academic skills, daily living skills, and social skills. The teachers are trained in teaching the whole child including conflict resolution, discipline management, and anger management. The discipline is clear, firm, and fair. The discipline strategies were developed to allow students to cope, maintain control, and work on problem solving skills (McCreight, 1999).

Successful DAEPs also have a transition component from the regular setting to DAEP and back again to the regular setting, while maintaining supports once the student is returned to the home campus. According to the Texas Education Code (2017) Section 37.008 (a-1) (5), schools are required to adopt transition related supports (including activities and procedures) used to facilitate student assignment between alternative and regular programs. Transfer procedures can include follow-up activities to track students after returning to the regular campus. Furthermore, Chapter 103 of the Texas Education Agency's (2010a) Commissioner's Rules Concerning Safe Schools states school districts must follow two transition-related standards. These standards include establishing a student transition timeframe and providing written and oral communication from the DAEP staff to the regular campus.

Parent involvement in the child's education is also stressed in a strong DAEP. The parents are encouraged to attend workshops relating to improving family life. In addition, the use of counseling for both student and family is provided in the school and community.

According to Flower, McDaniel, and Jolivet (2011), effective practice for students in alternative education (AE) settings can be defined “as a practice that is (a) applicable to students who are at risk, (b) practical for implementation in a school setting, and (c) capable of producing convincing positive student outcomes” (p. 491). Flower et al. identified the following school-based interventions that will give DAEP students the best chance of being successful academically and behaviorally: low student/teacher ratio, high structure, positive methods to increase appropriate behavior, school-based adult mentor, functional behavioral assessment, social skills instruction, effective academic instruction, parent involvement, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. These practices are critical for use in alternative educational settings.

According to McCreight (1999), the following list incorporates the eight best practices reported by Texas superintendents for successful DAEPs:

- One-on-one instruction
- Parent involvement
- A goal of success once back on the home campus
- The goal of non-return attendance to DAEP,
- Establishment of individual goals
- Staff development on conflict resolution
- A goal of increased academic performance
- Improving the reading level of each student

Powell (2003) noted seven essential elements of success as areas of focus for alternative programs:

- Functional assessment
- Holistic curriculum

- Effective instruction
- Transition supports
- Special education services implemented
- Safeguards to ensure needs are met
- A supportive climate

Freeman (2012) suggested the use of social and emotional learning, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports because they are evidence-based, cost effective approaches shown to reduce the number of DAEP placements, and they improve student behavior and academic success. These approaches provide consequences for misbehavior and emphasize taking responsibility for one's actions, while teaching positive behavior and reinforcing healthy ways to resolve conflict. The conceptual framework chosen for this study was based on Freeman's (2012) suggestions and was used as a lens in this study to gain insight from students that have had multiple placements to a DAEP and from counselors that have worked with students that have attended a DAEP.

Carreon (2013b) found rather than focusing on the high cost of placing students in DAEP, funding should be invested in positive behavioral interventions and supports or social learning.

Studies by Carpenter-Aeby and Aeby (2012) reveal many students find a benefit to a smaller class size, lower teacher-student ratio, and the family support aspect that can be provided by a DAEP environment. In fact, this same study revealed there is a high level of client satisfaction with overall services being provided. "Family responses indicated that the characteristics of the alternative school program contributed significantly to the success of their child" (Carpenter-Aeby & Aeby, 2012, p. 9).

Nelson and Eckstein (2008) discussed a service-learning model strategy designed to empower youth in hopes of ensuring a productive future. This model combines community service projects and classroom learning objectives. Reflection on the project is required by the student prior to, during, and after the project is complete. Data revealed the projects increased the academic, civic and social domains, as well as career skills. The service-learning models are also considered to be turnaround programs in hopes of constructing positive identities of at-risk youth. Students are tasked with writing grants to fund the projects. Positive outcomes of the models showed students were more likely to value school, be engaged in school, and have favorable attitudes, higher academic progress, increased self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment. In addition, the students developed personal efficacy, leadership skills, collaboration skills, and empathy to help others. Students were given a voice in the school, which allowed them to feel connected (Nelson & Eckstein, 2008).

McCreight (1999) believed students can change and sustain success within the educational settings when following best practices in education. However, further study is needed to determine the overall effects on achievement, attendance, discipline, and graduation rates (McCreight, 1999).

Social Learning Theory

ETR (2018) informs that the social learning theory (SLT) was originally presented in the 1940s to explain why humans imitate behavior. SLT describes how information is absorbed, processed, and learned by an individual, per Bandura (1971). In the 1960s, Albert Bandura, now known as the chief architect of social learning, added additional contributions to the SLT by showing that children naturally imitate the behavior of other children without needing or

receiving a reward for the new behavior (ETR, 2018). Albert Bandura stated, “Social learning theory approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants” (ETR, 2018, para. 2). McLeod (2016) notes Bandura believes individuals actively process information and think about the relationship between their behavior and its consequences. Bandura mentions observational learning cannot occur unless cognitive factors are present; individuals do not automatically observe a behavior and copy it (McLeod, 2016). Individuals will think prior to imitating others. Bandura (1971) also states that “in the social learning system, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experiences or by observing others” (p. 3). Social learning theory states learning is a cognitive progression that takes place in a social context which influence behavior (Tutorialspoint, 2018).

The outside environment is where a person can observe an action, understand its consequences, and become motivated to repeat it and adopt it. Behavior is affected by structural factors, such as service availability and policies, as well as by social factors, such as social norms and peer influence. (Urban Adolescent SRH, 2016, para. 1)

Cognitive understanding, behavior, and, environment mutually influence each other (Tutorialspoint, 2018). Figure 2 shows the interaction of the cognitive, behavior, and environmental factors and its impact on human behavior.

As reported by ETR (2018), SLT is a valuable and effective tool for educators who want to assist their students in learning new skills. As stated by Urban Adolescent SRH (2016), social learning theory can be used for behaviors that are influenced by the social environment in which the individual spends time. “The theory tells us the importance of creating an enabling environment, in which the desired behavior change is made easier. It also tells us that seeing the behavior in practice can help others adopt it” (Urban Adolescent SRH, 2016, para. 2). The SLT

can assist educators in determining why certain learning activities work, and why certain activities may not be as effective. As mentioned by Wheeler (2016),

Social modelling is a very powerful method of education. If children see positive consequences from a particular type of behavior, they are more likely to repeat that behavior themselves. Conversely, if negative consequences are the result, they are less likely to perform that behavior. (para. 4)

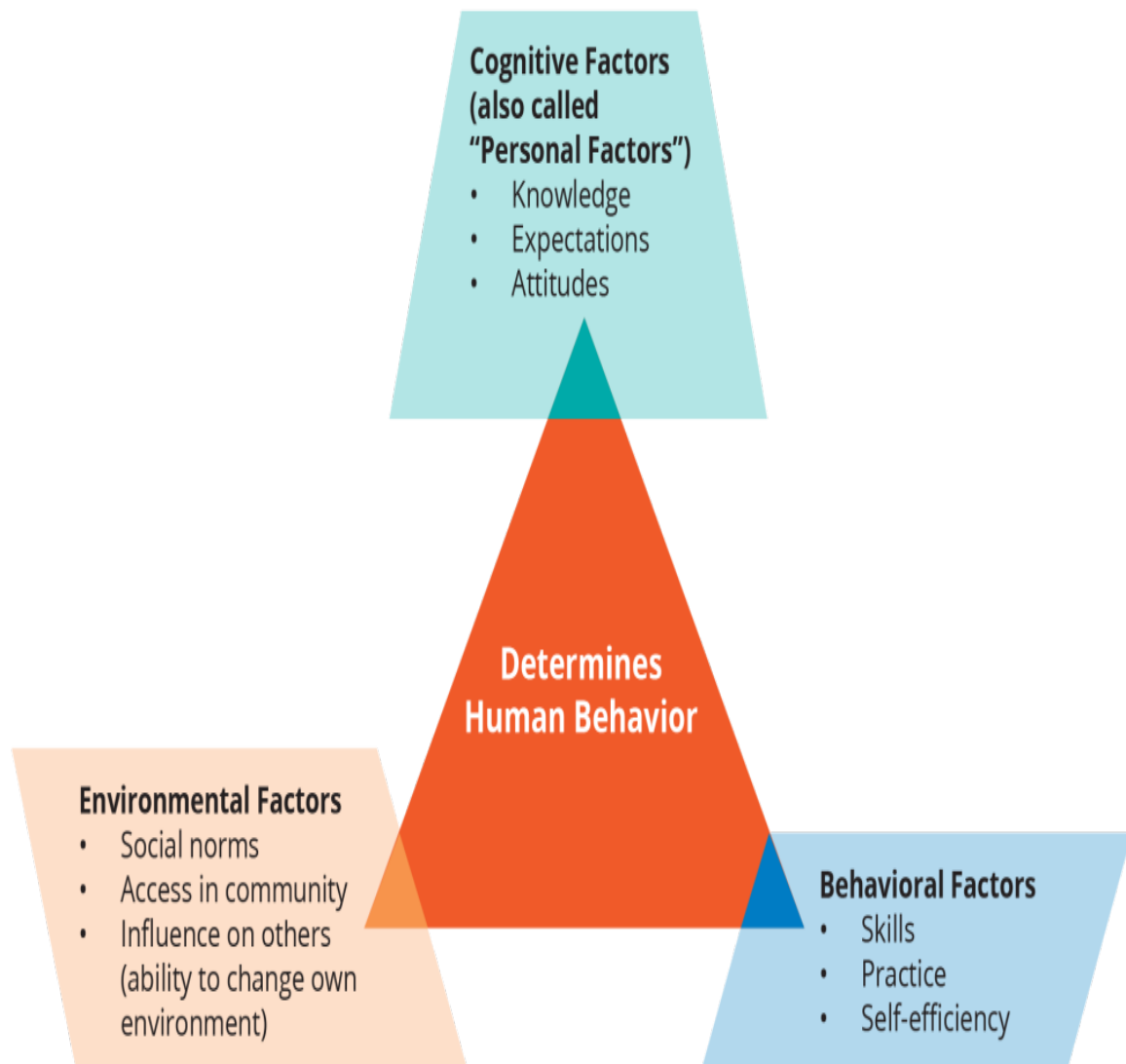


Figure 2. Albert Bandura's social learning theory triangle. The figure visually represents the connection between an individual's cognitive, behavior, and environmental factors that determine human behavior. Image reprinted from ETR (2018).

Another concept rooted in SLT is to encourage students to believe in themselves through confidence building and constructive feedback. Social learning theory also encourages the learner to:

- Observe and imitate the behaviors of others
- See positive behaviors modeled and practiced
- Increase their own capability and confidence to implement new skills
- Gain positive attitudes about implementing new skills
- Experience support from their environment in order to use their new skills (Urban Adolescent SRH, 2018, para. 1)

Restorative Justice

According to Mullet (2014), “effective discipline approaches seek healthy outcomes, stop the misbehavior, teach a more life-giving response, and motivate positive choices in the future” (p. 158). Restorative justice is a responsive approach that allows for the understanding of what happened, listening to those affected, and responding to the harm that was done in hopes of sustaining safe schools through restitution, resolution, and reconciliation (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Mullet (2014) referred to restorative justice as an empathy-based philosophy that offers a new angle on school discipline by centering on the harm done to relationships by being more responsive and restorative to the needs of the school community. The idea behind restorative justice is to “understand the relational nature of misbehavior, mend relationships, and make restitution” (Mullett, 2014, p. 157). Students that are involved in misbehavior need to work towards mending the harm that was created. This mending can be accomplished through a restorative discipline process that can “develop self-discipline, make amends, and restore injured relationships” (Mullett, 2014, p. 158). González (2012) further stated restorative justice “allows

students, teachers, families, schools, and communities to resolve conflict, promote academic achievement, and address school safety” (p. 281). The idea is by doing good, the student can give back to the school community. In essence, if a student does something nice for someone else, he or she will like you better. The resulting motivation to do good now will have positive results in the future.

Traditionally, schools rely on the *hard* power of the schools to maintain control of the campus by investigating what school rule was broken, who did it, and what punishment needs to be given (Morrison & Vaandering, 2014). However, the restorative justice framework relies on the *soft* power of relational ecologies to increase the power of influence by examining what happened and who was affected, and to repair the harm done.

The restorative justice approach includes, but is not limited to, the following strategies: Victim-offender mediation/reconciliation, community/restorative conferencing, peacemaking circles, and whole-school models (González, 2012; Morrison & Vaandering, 2014). The use of these models will hopefully satisfy the primary function of restorative practice by “reintegrating the student in the school community rather than removing the student and increasing the potential for separation, resentment, and recidivism” (González, 2012, p. 286).

Some critics of restorative discipline question its practicality. According to Mullet (2014), some of the reasons for the hesitation are due to the concern that some students will simply choose not to participate in the process of mending the relationships. Another reason is restorative justice takes time to have the restorative conversations that are needed. However, it should be known the restorative process will save time in the long run. Finally, some critics feel the misbehaving students will get off too easily if there are no punitive consequences. Mullet (2014) firmly stands ground by stating restorative justice is hard work and the student does not

get away with anything. The student must commit to “restore, reconcile, and make restitution, which are real consequences of their actions” (Mullett, 2014, p. 161).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Students in a DAEP setting have a variety of behavior concerns. As stated earlier, the state requires counseling services be provided to these students (Texas Education Agency, 2007). School counselors have opportunities to address emotional, academic, social and behavioral concerns with students that attend discipline alternative schools (Perepiczka, 2009). According to Brownstein (2009), about 10,000 schools across the state are trying to reduce the number of students leaving the regular education setting by implementing positive behavior supports (PBS). Brownstein also states successful students will not drop out of school. The school needs to provide academic support and counseling prevention to help students reach this level of success. Flower et al. (2011) suggested “the use of the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework in DAEP settings as a means to improve student academic and social behavior within a systems change approach” (p. 490). According to Simonsen and Sugai (2013), positive behavioral interventions and supports have proven to increase student outcomes on a social and academic basis. It is interesting to note that PBIS is effective in both the alternative education (AE) and the traditional setting. PBIS will support those in the AE setting in a reactive manner in hopes of moving students back to the traditional setting and progressing forward. PBIS can also be used in the traditional setting in a proactive manner in hopes of keeping students out of AE. However, the AE setting requires a more intense use of the PBIS, using a four-tier process. The positive behavioral interventions and supports framework is a counseling model that supports social competence and academic achievement, decision making, student behavior, and

staff behavior (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). The focus of PBIS includes teaching and monitoring student behavior with expectations, frequent use of social skills, campus-wide student recognition systems (e.g., point card or check-in/check-out intervention), and an instructional focus on responses for inappropriate behavior. The PBIS approach is data driven and proven to reduce discipline incidents, increase school safety, improve attendance rates, and increase academic outcomes. The goal is sustained modeling and rewarding of positive behavior will reduce misbehavior.

In a 2004 study by Lehr, Moreau, Lange, and Lanners, it was reported that mental health counselors spent less than 25% of the year providing student support on DAEP campuses. It was also stated limited time becomes a factor since the school is challenged with academic performances. One of the more difficult results of little time exposed to the counselors becomes the students do not get the opportunities to build a trusting relationship with their counselors (Carpenter-Abey et al., 2001). These counselors may be one of the few adults these students trust, allowing them to offer support (Cortez & Cortez, 2008). The reasons students are assigned to DAEP fall well beyond academic concerns. The counselors are tasked to fill the gaps left by other systems that work with repetitive disruptive students. Mullen and Lambie (2013) mentioned counselors are tasked to support all students, both academically and socially. However, many of these counselors do not have formal training when it comes to students enrolled at alternative schools. Counseling supports should be tailored for the specific need of the enrolled student. The counseling model should target the student on a holistic level. Counseling should focus on individual factors (such as substance abuse, mental health, or social disorders), academic factors, and family factors. In addition, a wraparound service should be included. This service is a “team approach to supporting the student’s needs in school, home,

and community” (Mullen & Lambie, 2013, p. 16). The team of resources may include mental health services, medical care, financial support, and mentorship. The wraparound approach should minimize misbehavior and recidivism and increase academic and behavioral performance. Additional training for counselors in counseling DAEP students should be included in their program curriculum. It is essential that a collaborative counseling support system is in place to support DAEP students holistically.

Students that have a sense of control have a greater chance of academic success. According to Miller, Fitch, and Marshall (2003), “locus of control is defined as the tendency of people to ascribe achievements and failures to either internal factors or external factors” (p. 548). Miller et al. also note students in alternative schools feel they have a higher level of internal sense of control. Alternative education students make connections between their thoughts and actions and academic and social consequences. In addition, alternative school teachers can help students cope with issues that are out of the control of the students. Increasing the perception of control for the at-risk student is an area that should be focused on to assist in achieving success.

Summary

Discipline alternative education programs are to provide an educational placement for students that promote success so that when they return to their home campus they will be prepared to make sound decisions, take responsibility for their actions, set goals, and achieve both behaviorally and academically. In this chapter, I provided a comprehensive literature review of what DAEPs are, the concerns for students that are assigned to DAEPs, and suggested interventions that could be used in DAEPs. In this study, my goal is to answer the question of why students return to DAEPs and to identify effective strategies which DAEP leaders can use to

provide an educational environment that provides students with skills they can use to reduce further misbehavior and ultimately reduce the recidivism rate for future placements to DAEPs. In Chapter 3, I provide details regarding the research design, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, plans for data analysis, and limitations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. Little research explains methods to reduce the recidivism rate of students in disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs). According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2017), “descriptive research seeks to describe the aspects of social reality under investigation” (p. 13).

The following research questions guided this descriptive qualitative research study:

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism?

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat student assignments to DAEP?

Figure 3 represents the progression of how this descriptive qualitative research study revealed perceptions from the viewpoint of secondary school students that had multiple discretionary assignments to DAEPs and from the viewpoint of secondary school counselors that provide emotional and behavioral support to DAEP students about the effectiveness of DAEPs.

Qualitative Research Study



Figure 3. Descriptive qualitative research design. This descriptive qualitative research design illustrates the timelines of the data collection, data analysis, research findings, and recommendations for future studies.

Participants

The focus of this descriptive qualitative research study were students who were enrolled in a DAEP in Sunrise ISD, and counselors that work at secondary schools in Sunrise ISD in the North Texas area. Participants in this study self-selected pseudonyms and I assigned a

pseudonym for the school district to ensure anonymity. Anonymity of information collected from this research was conducted by only collecting names of the participants and each participant was given assurance that the project will not link individual responses with participants' identities. The student interview instrument shown in Appendix A, the student photovoice instrument shown in Appendix B, and the counselor focus group instrument shown in Appendix C did not contain any identifying information regarding the participants. The researcher linked individual participants with their responses/data by allowing each participant to select a unique and confidential pseudonym prior to collecting data. Pseudonyms were used on all student interview and photovoice instruments and the counselor focus group instrument in place of identifying information to protect participants' responses and/or data at all times, so a participant's identity cannot be revealed. A separate document was used to link each participant's name along with their pseudonym. This document was kept separate from any of the student interviews and photovoice documents.

Table 2

Student Participants, Age, Grade, and Number of DAEP Placements

Student's Name	Age	Grade	# of DAEP Placements
Carlos	15	10	2
Isaac	17	12	4
Labron	12	7	3
Luis	17	10	2
Oscar	16	10	3
Peter	15	10	3
Phil	15	9	3

(table continues)

Student's Name	Age	Grade	# of DAEP Placements
Samantha	15	9	4
Sasha	17	12	2
Tony	13	7	2
Xavier	15	10	2
Victor	15	10	3

Participants for this study were chosen using a homogenous purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was chosen as the preferred sampling approach as it allowed the researcher to base the selection of the participants for specific goals of the research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017; Merriam, 2009). Data was collected from 12 secondary school students that have had multiple discretionary assignments to DAEPs. Table 2 provides a list of the student participants by name, age, grade level, and number of DAEP placements.

Students must have had prior assignments to DAEPs and be currently assigned to a DAEP for at least 30 days or more. Face-to-face recruitment of the students was conducted using the following parameters:

- The researcher spoke with the district's DAEP counselor to recommend students that fit the selection criteria noted below:
- Participants were recruited for the student interviews and photovoice project based on the following criteria:
 - Students must have been enrolled in Grades 6-12.
 - Students must have been enrolled in the district's DAEP for at least 30 days or more.
 - Students must have had at least one (or more) prior DAEP placement(s).
 - There is no gender or racial/ethnic criteria to be met.
- The DAEP counselor spoke to students (privately in her office at the DAEP) that fit the above criteria of the study utilizing the face-to-face recruitment letter for students.

A copy of the recruitment letter is in Appendix D.

- If the students were interested in participating, the counselor then set up a private meeting with the researcher at their DAEP.
- At this meeting, student consent forms were provided for the student to take home for parents to sign. A copy of the consent form is in Appendix E.

Data was also collected through homogenous purposive sampling of 12 secondary counselors who provided emotional and behavioral supports to students that are assigned to DAEPs. Table 3 provides a list of the counselor participants by name, number of years as a counselor, and grade levels supported. Face-to-face recruitment of the counselors was conducted using the following parameters:

- Participants were recruited for the counselor focus group based on the following criteria:
 - Counselors must have provided counseling supports to secondary students that are currently assigned to the district's DAEP.
 - There is no gender or racial/ethnic criteria to be met.
- The researcher spoke to counselors that fit the above criteria of the study utilizing the face-to-face recruitment letter for counselor's letter as shown in Appendix F.
- If the counselors were interested in participating in the study, the researcher provided the counselor a consent form and gathered counselor signatures. A copy of the consent form is in Appendix G.

Table 3

Counselor Participants, Number of Years as a Counselor, and Grade Levels Supported

Counselor's Name	# Years as a Counselor	Grades Supported
April	2	9-12
Darla	6	6-8
Donna	19	9-12
Frannie	11	6-8

(table continues)

Counselor's Name	# Years as a Counselor	Grades Supported
Jackie	6	9-12
Jan	1	9-12
Jane	19	K-12
Paislee	10	6-8
Rachel	5	6-8
Shirley	6	6-8
Stella	4	6-8
Susan	3	6-8

Ethical Considerations

Participants were assured their participation in this descriptive qualitative research study was completely confidential and voluntary and they were free to opt out of the study, before, during, or after their participation. Signed informed consent by all participants was utilized for this study. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2017) noted informed consent is “intended to safe guard participants from any mental or physical harm that might befall them as a result of their participation” (p. 74). In addition, all participants were fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in the research project before they agreed to participate in the study. Roberts (2010) noted all participants should be informed of the nature and purpose of the study; the expected duration of the study; a description of the procedures, potential risks, potential benefits to them or others based on the results of the study; the confidentiality procedures; and participation in the study was completely voluntary. Ethical mandates were followed, according to standards set forth in the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB) for this descriptive qualitative study.

Instrumentation

This descriptive qualitative research study included three modes of collecting data. The first method was a semi-structured student interview. The second method was a student driven photovoice project. The third method was a counselor focus group interview.

The first method, semi-structured interviews, was utilized “to gain rich qualitative data on a particular subject from the perspective of selected individuals” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017, p. 107). Qualitative interviews allow for exploratory and descriptive data and can be used in conjunction with focus groups to allow for identification of patterns to present thick descriptions and perceptions of the participants. So, in this study, interviews served to gain insight to past experiences of successes and/or struggles that students have had while attending DAEPs in hopes of recognizing themes to assist in identifying strategies that DAEP leaders can use to increase their effectiveness and reduce the rate of recidivism.

The second method, the photovoice project, blended “narrative with photography to explore community issues” (Nykiforuk, Vallianatos, & Nieuwendyk, 2011, p. 104). Photovoice projects are designed to provide participants a way to identify, record, and share their personal experiences via photographs they take. According to Nykiforuk, Vallianatos, and Nieuwendyk (2011), “photovoice has gained popularity as a qualitative research method that permits researchers from various disciplines to visualize individuals’ perceptions about their everyday realities” (p. 104). Marshall and Rossman (2016) note photographs are visual representations that are “evocative and profoundly moving” (p. 186). In this study, the photovoice method served to convert photographs into written narratives which were then used to identify themes. These themes were then used to reveal student perceptions of what DAEPs can do to be more effective in hopes of reducing the recidivism rate.

The third method, focus groups, is used when “multiple participants are interviewed together, making the focus group distinct from one-on-one interview methods” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017, p. 149). Focus groups are inherently different than semi-structured interviews because they provide information from the participants based on their interactions with each other in the group. The data collected from the focus group revealed additional information that would otherwise not be present in interviews alone. The use of the focus groups included purposeful questioning to reveal perceptions of DAEP effectiveness, from the viewpoint of secondary school counselors that provide emotional and behavioral support to students that are assigned to DAEPs.

Data Collection

Data collection for this descriptive qualitative research took place in the fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic school year. These dates were intentionally selected to allow ample time to collect data and to ensure the availability of the participants. School was in session for both secondary students and counselors during the time of data collection. This study included the following three modes of collecting data.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The first method utilized semi-structured individual interviews with each of the 12 secondary school student participants selected from a DAEP in Sunrise ISD. Semi-structured individual interview questions were open-ended. The semi-structured student individual interview questions and protocol are included in Appendix A. The semi-structured individual interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Photovoice

The second method was a photovoice protocol provided by the manual found on photovoice.org (Photovoice, 2014). The photovoice method was chosen as one form of data collection because it allowed the opportunity to “generate a creative nature that can inform research questions in ways not possible through text” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 187). I chose to use the photovoice project with students to allow more opportunities for the students to share their feelings toward DAEPs. I feel the students were able to express themselves in a different way because they were able to choose the pictures to take. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), “photographs have the unique capability to capture visual phenomena in a seemingly objective manner” (p. 186). The pictures were taken outside of the interview setting, allowing the student more time to process their thoughts and provide more opportunity for a variety of creative photos.

Each student was asked to take five different pictures based on one prompt. The prompt was open-ended and was stated as “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”. Detailed instruction on the nature, appropriateness, and the use of human subjects in the photos was included in the photovoice handout provided to the student participants, as shown in Appendix D. In addition, each student was reminded they were not to use human subjects in their photos and that any photo deemed inappropriate by the researcher would not be used in this study. Students were instructed to take the five pictures with their smart phone and email the pictures to me. Participants engaged in the photovoice project spanning a timeline of approximately 12 weeks. The photographs generated by the participants would be incomplete if each picture did not accurately convey the story behind the photograph. Each student engaged in a face-to-face discussion with me, after they submitted their five

pictures, to present their views and concerns relevant to the photovoice prompt. This discussion established accurate meanings of their pictures to ensure trustworthiness of how each picture represents a DAEP to them. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each student after the photovoice project was discussed. Student semi-structured interview questions can be found in Appendix C. Photovoice member checking meetings were audio recorded and transcribed.

Focus Group Interview

The third method was a focus group interview conducted with counselors of DAEP students utilizing a protocol developed by Richard Krueger (2002). The 12 counselors selected for the focus group provided emotional and behavioral support to students enrolled in the same DAEP. Two separate focus groups were conducted in order to have a more manageable sized group and to maximize counselor participation. I acted as the moderator. The focus group interview questions were open-ended. The focus group interview questions and protocol are in Appendix E. The focus group interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. The focus of a qualitative analysis is to gain a deep understanding of the participants' perceptions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017). The analysis of data in the current qualitative study was based on student semi-structured interviews, a student photovoice project, and a two focus group interviews.

Data analysis research studies involves a continuous interplay between data collection and data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A qualitative study capitalizes on ordinary ways of making sense of the data (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) reminds qualitative researchers there is no particular moment when data analysis begins. I began analyzing data following the student interviews to begin identifying patterns, and to facilitate subsequent data collection from the counselor focus groups (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative data analysis gives meaning to the collected data by telling the story gleaned from the students and counselors. Esterberg (2002) suggests “getting intimate with data” (p. 157).

In this qualitative study, I followed the data analysis and coding procedures suggested by Creswell (2009) and Esterberg (2002). Esterberg (2002) suggested that open coding is a process where “you work intensively with your data, line by line, identifying themes and categories that seem of interest” (p. 158). Once the data from this research were examined thoroughly through the open coding process, I reviewed the codes for emerging themes in the data. I followed Creswell’s (2009) six steps during the data analysis process:

- Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
- Read through the data to reflect on the overall meaning to gain a general sense of the information and ideas that the participants conveyed.
- Begin detailed analysis with the coding process by organizing the material into segments then labeling those categories with terms based on the data collected from the participants.
- Use the coding process to generate codes that will assist in revealing themes.
- Develop how the description of the themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative.
- Interpret the meaning of the data.

Creswell (2009) was intentional in stating that while these steps are described in linear order, they are more of an interactive practice to analysis whereas the process is not simply a static, linear order of analysis and there is not an exact order to follow.

During and after the data collection process, I followed specific steps to understand and make meaning of the data that were involved in this study. The process of analyzing the transcripts included initial readings of the transcripts, organization and coding of responses, completion of data analysis, and reporting the findings. This included the establishment of preset categories, analyzing collected data through the use of these preset categories, and identifying themes from the data analysis process. The data analysis process included the use of a priori codes as preset categories to sort, organize, and synthesize the data collected to identify emerging themes (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). The use of a priori coding provides guidance in understanding and making meaning of the data collected as a result of a thorough analysis of information. The a priori codes selected were critical to the data analysis process as they were derived from the conceptual framework explained in Chapter 1 and from words and phrases of the research questions and interview questions. Table 4 provides a list of the priori codes used in this study.

Table 4

A Priori Codes

Code	Category
TR	Transition to and from the DAEP
AR	Available Resources
QP	Qualities and Purpose of a DAEP
RS	Relationships at School
SL	Social Learning
SF	Structure and Format of DAEP

Member checking occurred during a photo analysis session with each student after they submitted their photos for the photovoice project. Member checking is when interpretations and conclusions are confirmed with members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researcher bias was reduced by actively involving the students in the interpretation and confirming the meaning of how each photo the student participants submitted represented what DAEP meant to them. Member checking is used to validate, verify, or assess the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Harvey, 2015). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility.

Methods triangulation is a procedure that utilizes two or more different methods to find meaning regarding the research questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017). This study used a three-part data collection process (student semi-structured interviews, photovoice projects, and focus group discussions) in order to triangulate. These three methods provided data from two separate sets of participants (students and counselors) that had direct exposure to the effectiveness, or the lack of effectiveness, of a DAEP as a means of finding convergence.

The intent of this qualitative research was to discover patterns to recognize relationships in order to draw conclusions and identify themes which appear after extensive review of the data and thorough analysis of the research topic. This qualitative study had a combined deductive and inductive approach. I used the three prongs of my conceptual framework (social learning theory, restorative justice, and positive behavioral and intervention supports) as a guide to create my research questions and instruments. This conceptual framework was used as a lens in this study to gain insight from students that have had multiple placements to a DAEP and from counselors that have worked with students that have attended a DAEP. Descriptive coding and thematic

analysis of the student interviews and the counselor focus group were conducted to reveal various themes to generate new theories. I converted the written narratives from the photovoice project and coded and analyzed those as well.

Transcriptions of the student semi-structured interviews, photovoice projects, and focus group discussions were analyzed and organized into the preset categories identified in Table 4, within the NVivo program. After all the data collected was initially coded, it was further analyzed to determine if any larger categories existed. Patterns were reviewed within the categorical data to determine similarities and differences (Taylor-Power & Renner, 2003). The larger categories that emerged from this analysis were summarized as themes and the data were reviewed again to ensure effective alignment to the themes that emerged. Counting how many times themes were repeated was also part of this process as well, as a form of verification. It is important to state NVivo was only used to assist me as a technological tool, as stated earlier, I dissected the data to assist in revealing themes in this study.

An analysis of the generated themes was conducted to connect the findings with the conceptual framework of this study and the research questions in hopes of identifying strategies and techniques that DAEP leaders can implement to provide a more restorative practice to assist in reducing the recidivism rate.

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2017) mentioned validity and trustworthiness are crucial in ensuring readers that findings from the study are plausible and credible. Validity is a process that involves the researcher earning the confidence of the reader by illustrating the study is credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017). Trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Polit & Beck, 2014). The student interview questions, the student photovoice

prompts, and the counselor focus group questions used in this qualitative study were reviewed by multiple professionals that serve in a variety of roles in the field of education to ensure validity and trustworthiness. I asked a student assistance counselor, a DAEP assistant principal, a middle school principal, and two college professors to review the instruments and provide feedback that assisted me in rewording, adding, or deleting questions or prompts from my study. These suggestions were utilized when creating the instruments in this study so that information gathered during this study would align with the conceptual framework and the research questions in order to gain perceptions from both students and counselors on what practices can be used in DAEPs to reduce the rate of recidivism.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of this study was the embarrassment that students may have due to being assigned to a DAEP. Students assigned to DAEPs are at-risk (Texas Education Agency, 2007). There may also be a risk of students not being honest as well as students not willing to give full participation and feedback.

Limitations may include bias from both the students assigned to DAEPs and by counselors that provide services to students that are enrolled in those programs. Generally, students see DAEPs as a school that bad kids go to; therefore, the school itself must be bad. Counselors work with students that have been placed in DAEPs multiple times; therefore, these counselors may have the perception that DAEPs must not be effective in the first place.

Additional limitations include the number of assignments and the length of each assignment by students that have been placed at a DAEP. Students may or may not have enough

background experience at DAEPs to provide viable participation in order to establish themes and perceptions.

Regarding these limitations, it was critical that I was cautious when selecting student participants. In addition, I was mindful of the questions and prompts asked to limit bias or leading questions. Lastly, I used a variety of methods and resources to reduce bias and ensure trustworthiness of this study.

Summary

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. This descriptive qualitative research study focused on students enrolled in a DAEP in Sunrise ISD, and counselors that work in secondary schools in Sunrise ISD in the North Texas area. Data collection began September 2017 and was completed by November 2017. This descriptive qualitative research study included semi-structured interviews, a photovoice process, and focus groups. Chapter 4 includes narratives that resulted from the student interviews, the student photovoice project, and the counselor focus groups. In addition, Chapter 4 includes an analysis of the data revealing emerging themes and perspectives from the viewpoint of secondary school students that have had multiple discretionary assignments to DAEPs and from the viewpoint of secondary school counselors that provide emotional and behavioral support to students assigned to DAEPs. Lastly, Chapter 4 reveals the relation of the emerging themes to the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. The intention of the study was to reveal the reasons why students return to discipline alternative education programs (DAEPs) and to identify effective practices which support a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate. In Chapter 4, I reveal the emerging themes generated by the analysis of the collected data. In addition, I show how the identified themes are connected to the conceptual framework components.

The results support the purpose of the study, which was to reveal perceptions about DAEPs and provide effective strategies to improve them by answering the research questions:

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism?

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat student assignments to DAEP?

Perceptions of DAEP effectiveness were identified through the study of 12 DAEP students that have had multiple placements to DAEPs and 11 secondary campus-based student assistance counselors that provide emotional and behavioral supports to DAEP students, and one district Director of Counseling from a Discipline Alternative Education Program in Sunrise ISD. The student interview and photovoice project findings are organized into six domains: (1) Background Information, (2) Home Campus and DAEP Experiences, (3) Perceptions of Home

Campus and DAEP Staff, (4) The Purpose of DAEP, (5) Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus, and (6) Photovoice Project. Results are presented through a narrative of each student interview and photovoice project. The counselor focus groups findings are organized into nine domains: (1) Initial Discussion of Student Photovoice Project Photos, (2) Secondary Discussion of Student Photovoice Project Photos, (3) Philosophy of Counseling, (4) Counselor Roles at a DAEP, (5) Purpose of DAEP, (6) Environmental Concerns, (7) Strengths of Their DAEP, (8) Weaknesses of Their DAEP, and (9) Counselor Recommendations. Results are presented through a narrative of the counselor focus group interviews.

Student Narratives

Twelve students (Carlos, Isaac, Labron, Luis, Oscar, Peter, Phil, Samantha, Sasha, Tony, Xavier, and Victor) enrolled at a DAEP in Sunrise ISD were recruited as participants. Sunrise ISD has four high schools, one alternative high school, and eight middle schools. Student selection criteria for participation in this study mandated that students needed to be of secondary school age and must have had at least two or more placements in a DAEP. In this study, the photovoice method served to convert photographs into written narratives which were used to identify themes. These themes were then used to reveal student perceptions of what DAEPs can do to be more effective in hopes of reducing the recidivism rate for troubled youth.

Student narratives from the student interviews and the photovoice project from the 12 student participants are presented below.

Carlos

Background Information

Carlos is a 15-year-old 10th-grade male student with a total of two DAEP placements. Carlos says he plans to go to college and study culinary arts to become a chef. Carlos states his relationship with his family is really close. He lives with both his mom and dad and has two siblings. Carlos said that neither of his siblings have ever been to DAEP. Carlos is a quiet child that does not really speak unless he is spoken to. Carlos says he likes school because of the social aspects. He is able to meet new people that he would not be able to meet if he was home all day. It was mentioned earlier that Carlos is a quiet kid, but he also likes to be social. Carlos said he likes the social side of school. He said he tends to be more vocal around friends and people he knows. Carlos states he stopped liking school in the fifth grade. He said it was because of some of the classes. He feels some of the classes do not teach stuff that students are actually going to use. He would rather have classes where they teach him “how to set up a bank account or something.” Carlos says “instead of teaching us the smallest cell, I don’t know, stuff like that. I’d rather be taught something that I use every day.”

Carlos has been to DAEP two times. One time in ninth grade and the other time in 10th grade. He says he began skipping school while in middle school, but was never sent to DAEP. In fact, he was transferred to another middle school where he did not get into trouble. Carlos started skipping much more often when he got to high school. He started getting bored of his classes towards the beginning of the school year. Then he figured out that a lot of people were skipping so he joined them. His skipping happened so often that his home campus decided to send him to DAEP for the first time. He said his attendance was so bad at the beginning of his 10th-grade year they decided to send him for a second time. Carlos states the main reason he

gets suspended from DAEP is for dress code reasons. Carlos also mentioned his attitude towards staff got him in trouble as well. Carlos has had many absences while at DAEP as well. Carlos said he did get home consequences when he was assigned to DAEP. He lost his phone privileges, his television, and his gaming consoles. He was given his phone back in the middle of his 30-day DAEP placement, but will not get his tv and gaming consoles until he successfully completes his 30-day placement.

Carlos was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He original answer was “I don’t know.” He later said he planned to stop skipping classes and then one day he showed up late to school and then said to himself, “I’m too late for first block, might as well skip.” Then it just kept happening every day and he said, “You know what? I kind of don’t want to go,” so then he would just wander off. Carlos said skipping became easier as time went on. He said he did worry about the home consequences prior to making his poor choices. He said he would rather skip and chance it than come back. If he got caught, he would pay the consequences.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Carlos was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He stated the dress code makes it hard. Students at this particular DAEP must have controlled hair, that is, of natural color, and not judged distracting. They must wear a plain white shirt (t-shirt, golf shirt, dress shirt) with no other colors or logos; an optional plain gray sweatshirt (with no other colors or logos, no hood, strings, or zippers); plain blue jeans; no belt; black, white, or gray socks; and athletic shoes. Students are not allowed to wear jewelry or have facial hair. Make-up must not be distracting. Students must cover up any

tattoos, hickeys, or intentional scarring. Carlos states that nothing, besides the dress code, at DAEP makes it difficult for him to be successful. He said skipping classes at DAEP is not an issue if he decides to get on the bus in the morning, because this DAEP has adult supervision of students at all times. Students are supervised from the moment they get off the school bus at the beginning of the day until they get back on the school bus at the end of the day. Students are escorted from class to class, to the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch, and even to the restrooms. He said the structure of this DAEP does not allow students to just skip classes.

Carlos was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He said some of the students in his school get him in trouble. More specifically, there is too much going on in the class and he cannot focus. He also mentioned he would skip classes or the entire day with his friends. Carlos also mentioned he felt like he was digging himself into a hole. He was missing so many classes and he was getting further and further behind and he was afraid that he would not be able to catch up. It was just easier for him not to try.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Carlos was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He noted they follow and enforce every rule and most of his teachers really seem to care about the students. He said his teachers help each student on an individual level. The structure at this DAEP ensures there are no more than 15 students per class. Each class has one teacher and often has an educational aide in each class as well.

Carlos was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social

and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Carlos noted his home campus student assistance counselors did not provide support before he was placed at either of his two DAEP placements. He did say that his home campus student assistance counselors did come over to DAEP one time a week to provide group counseling supports to any student at DAEP from his home campus. Carlos noted his home campus student assistance counselors did provide him with supports after he left DAEP for the first time. He said she only visited with him one time when he had gotten in trouble back at his home campus. She took him out of in-school-suspension to talk with him. Carlos wishes she would have visited him more often when he was not in trouble when he was back at his home campus. He feels the connection and transition support back at his home campus may have helped him make better choices preventing him from being reassigned to the DAEP.

Carlos was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at the DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Carlos said he “never really spoke to her” during or after his DAEP placement. He said he talked to her the day that she got all his academic “stuff” taken care of and made sure he was in the right classes. However, she never saw him so that she might help him make better choices.

The Purpose of DAEP

Carlos was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP. He stated in some cases, yes. Carlos said, “There might be students who might be like, Oh, no. The school was too strict. I don’t want to go back there.” Carlos feels this DAEP can help kids make better choices in the future just because it’s the right thing to do as well.

Carlos was then asked why does he think that some students do not come back to the DAEP. He said it was it was strict and that they did not like the structure or the environment. He also feels some students learn from their DAEP experience and that is why they do not come back to the DAEP. Some students really do learn it is easier to do the right thing and that sometimes we do not get into trouble because it is the right thing to do. Carlos stressed to me that works for some of the kids, not all of them. Carlos said the reason he does not want to come back to this DAEP is because he does not like the school itself.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

When asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. He stated” I don’t know.” He feels this DAEP should keep doing what it is doing. He was then asked what can his home campus do differently so that he would not be sent back to the DAEP for a third time. Carlos said, “I guess make the classes more engaging because I get bored in my classes, so I don’t want to go anymore.” Carlos said he does not “like showing up to class and then, all right, go ahead and do these questions, and that’s the whole class.” He wants to make the classes better, so he will not be tempted to skip again.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Carlos during the course of this study are described below. Carlos was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt: “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Carlos’s first picture has a clock with the time of 7:07 displayed (Figure 4). Carlos said the days at DAEP feel so long. I clarified by asking if the day itself felt long or does the overall placement feel long? He said the “number of days a student is placed at DAEP can feel so long”.



Figure 4. The 7:07 clock. The overall DAEP placement feels like forever.

Carlos was assigned to the DAEP for 30 days for each of his DAEP placements. He knows some students can be assigned to the DAEP for 45, 60, 75, 90, and up to 180 days. He feels that would be an eternity to students. Carlos stated this DAEP goes from 7:20 am to 2:40 pm. He noted that was the same number of hours at his high school. He did mention the school day seems shorter than at his home campus. His reason is because at this DAEP, students get out

at 2:40 while at his home campus students do not even get home until after 5:00 pm. Carlos likes that the DAEP starts and ends earlier than his home campus because he feels he has more of a nighttime.

Carlos's second picture has a glass of ice (Figure 5). He said it represents this DAEP because some of the classes inside the school are really cold. Students are not allowed to wear their own sweater. He feels staff at this DAEP needs to warm the building up or allow us to wear sweaters of their choosing. Carlos feels a cold school has an effect on how students learn in certain classes because some classes are colder than others.



Figure 5. Glass filled with ice. DAEP is cold all the time. Carlos feels the cold can affect the learning.

Carlos's third picture has a melon on it (Figure 6). He stated the melon reminded him of a brain. He says this DAEP helps him concentrate on his work because students do not have anything to get distracted. Carlos feels the way the school is set up and the procedures and

structure to the school prevent distractions and he finds that to be a good thing. He also said his grades are up because all he can do at the DAEP is work on class stuff and there are no distractions. He has nothing else to do but work.



Figure 6. Cantaloupe. The melon represents a brain which then represents concentration. DAEP does not allow students to get distracted or to distract others from learning. Grades go up.

Carlos's fourth picture has two tests on it (Figure 7). One test has a "C" on it while the other has a "96" on it. Carlos said the test with a "C" on it was taken at his home campus and the test with a "96" on it was done at the DAEP. He said the DAEP has helped him raise his grades because of less distractions and all the work that is expected. Carlos noted that having smaller classes with more teacher interactions helped his grades get better as well. He also noted this DAEP does not allow students to take school work home. He finds this helpful because he

knows he may not do it at home or he will most likely forget about it, leave it at his house.

When asked why he did this photovoice project since he had to do it at home, he stated that it helped me out and it may help him out. He saw the benefit from doing it.

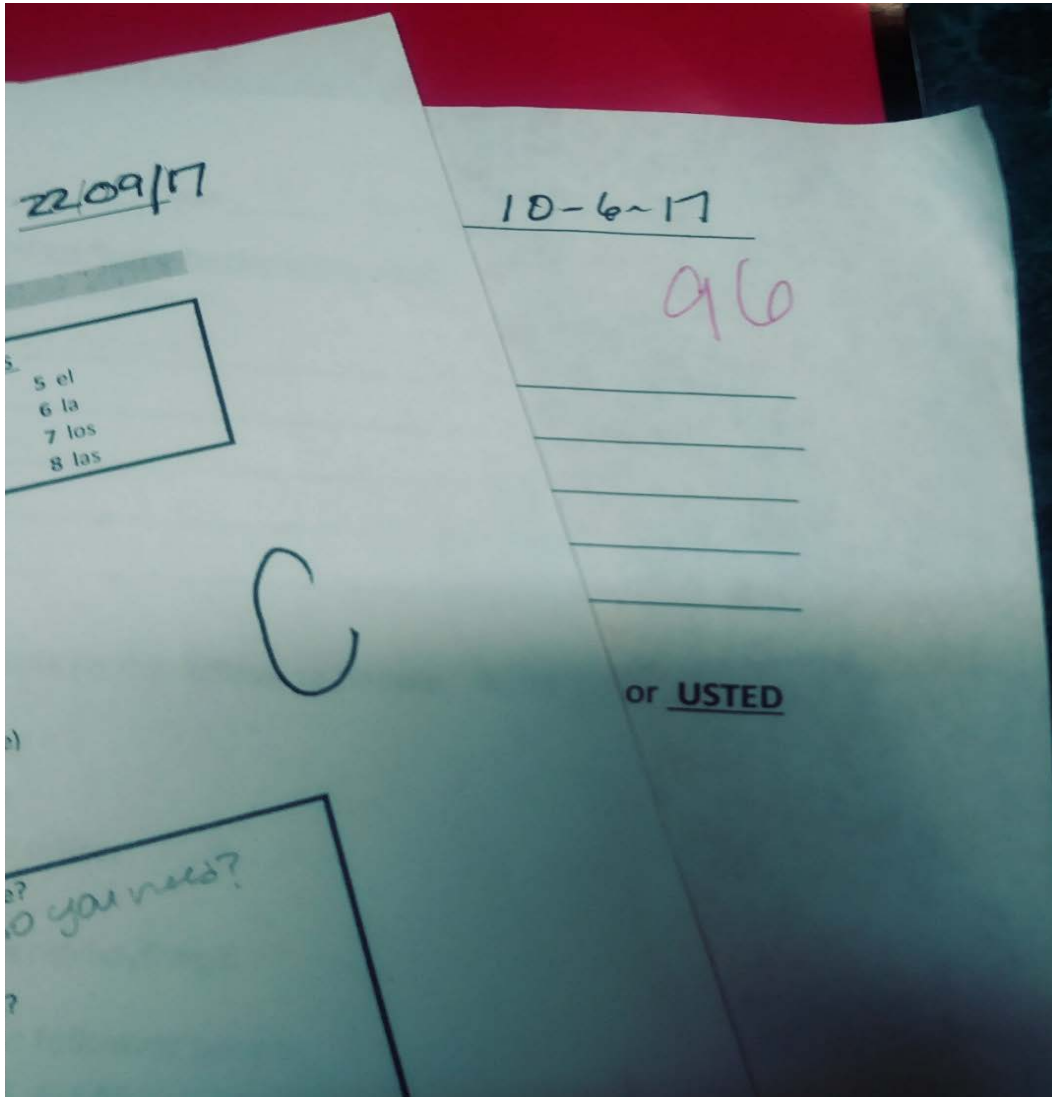


Figure 7. Two tests. The C was at the home campus and the 96 was at the DAEP. Student grades increase at the DAEP.

Carlos's fifth picture shows a camera on the back of a cell phone (Figure 8). Carlos chose this picture because he feels students are always being watched at the DAEP. He said at the DAEP, students are being supervised at all times. He feels sometimes it is "hard because you're constantly being watched. It might be a little uncomfortable I guess." He states that at

the same time, it is better for the students because students are safe. He knows students are being watched by cameras in each room, the gym, café, and all the hallways. However, he feels things are safer because teachers are always watching students from the moment they get on the bus until the moment they get off the bus. Carlos says “there’s an adult staring at you. Pretty much all the time, hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, gym, track, all areas of the school.” He also states, “It makes you feel a bit uncomfortable, but you also know more about safety.”



Figure 8. Cell phone camera. All students at the DAEP are being watch all the time. It makes students feel uncomfortable, but he knows it is for safety and behavior management.

Isaac

Background Information

Isaac is a 17-year-old 12th-grade male student with four total DAEP placements. Isaac says he is an outgoing person and enjoys playing sports. He likes to box, play soccer, and spend

time with his family. Isaac has a big family and lives with his mom, dad, and his sister and her children. His sister has four children and one on the way. He also has an older sister that lives with her boyfriend. Isaac said both of his sisters were sent to the DAEP in the past. Isaac said he did not really get in trouble at home for being sent to the DAEP. He said he did have his phone taken away, but he was more disappointed because he lost something else. He lost the trust of his parents. Isaac said, “they do not trust me anymore.”

Isaac says he enjoys going to school because he learns something new every day. He states he does not like school because of the food they serve. He states he likes everything about school otherwise, “Yeah, I ain’t got no problems with school . . . just that.”

Isaac has been to the DAEP four separate times. His current placement is for 90 days. Isaac was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He said the reason for him coming back to the DAEP was simply for making bad choices and hanging out with the wrong crowd of people. He also stated he did not think he would get caught making his poor choices, but he knew if he did get caught there was a chance he would go to the DAEP.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Isaac was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He said he has issues with talking back to adults.

Isaac was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He stated his social life and his talking back made it difficult to be successful. Isaac mentioned the fact the home campus was loose with their structure and that made it hard to do well. Because of this he would often get in trouble with the teachers. He

then noted some of the teachers on the home campus made things hard as well. He felt they would not explain things to him and they would pick on him for no reason. Isaac mentioned his home campus “was too big and had too many students” in his classes.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Isaac was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He stated his teachers were very helpful and they explained things to him that he was unsure of. He also liked the fact that the classes were smaller due to the structure of the DAEP. There were no more than 15 students in a class at any time. Sometimes there were much less than 15 students per class.

Isaac was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Isaac noted his home campus student assistance counselors did not provide support before he was placed at either of his four DAEP placements. He did say his home campus student assistance counselors did come to the DAEP one time a week to talk with him about how he is doing and “stuff like that.” He said her visits help him to stay motivated to stay on track. I asked Isaac if his student assistance counselor provided him with supports after he left the DAEP the first three times. He said “I never saw my counselors. I never talked to any of my counselors. The only time I would talk to them is because of grades and they would call me up to their office and that’s it.” They never talked to him about his past or current behavior.

Isaac was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Isaac said she “helped him out tons” during his DAEP placement. Isaac said his DAEP counselor never checked in on him when he went back to his home campus the first three times.

The Purpose of DAEP

Isaac was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP. He feels that it can help change behavior because it is a totally different school and that is what DAEPs are supposed to do.

Isaac was then asked why does he think that some students do not come back to the DAEP. He said students would not want to come back to the DAEP because there is a lack of communication with other students. Isaac said, “there is no social life here and you gotta be independent at all times.”

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

Isaac was asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. He feels this particular DAEP is already doing its job, so he does not know what needs to be changed. He also said he is not sure because he has never been helped before after

leaving a DAEP. I then reminded him that he has been at this DAEP three times prior to this placement and he kept coming back. He was asked again what could be different. He said, “Give me more good advice and stuff.” The assistant principal always helped him out and gave good advice, but Isaac did not always listen. In general, Isaac wants staff to be more supportive and to just listen to students. He then stressed that problems are with the students and not the staff. Students just need to listen more. Schools can give you all the procedures, but does that make the change in the student? Isaac said it is the support the adults give that makes a difference.

When asked where he would rather be if he had to choose his home campus or the DAEP, Isaac stated that he prefers the home campus because of the social life. However, he does like the structure of this DAEP because he gets more work done because there are no distractions and his grades go up.

My last question for Isaac was what would he change at DAEP if he had a magic wand. He said he would change the dress code.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Isaac during the course of this study are described below. Isaac was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Isaac’s first picture is of Pro-style, training boxing gloves (Figure 9). Isaac says that students are not allowed to fight at a DAEP. I clarified and asked if he was allowed to fight at his home campus. He stated no, but students especially cannot fight at a DAEP. He said students can fight at the DAEP if they want to get arrested.

Isaac's second picture is of a road (Figure 10). He said he chose the road because students can either choose the good side or the bad side of the road. Students can choose to stay on the right track or there will be consequences and DAEPs can help students with making good choices. Isaac said DAEPs help by showing ways to "take the right road and do good or you can take the bad and do, you know, mess up." He said, "if students do right they stay out of DAEP, if you do bad you come to DAEP, or DAEP admin will add days to your current DAEP placement."



Figure 9. Boxing gloves. Students are not allowed to fight at DAEP.

Isaac was asked if the DAEP helped him make choices since he has already been to this DAEP four times. Isaac said yes, but the crowd he hung out with was the wrong crowd and he made bad choices because of them and he keeps coming back. Isaac told me that this time will be different. That this time the DAEP has helped him a lot. He attributes this change to various reasons. One reason is because he is a senior and “when this school ends there’s a world outside” He also says he does not plan to return to the DAEP because he has now matured and that will assist him in being successful.

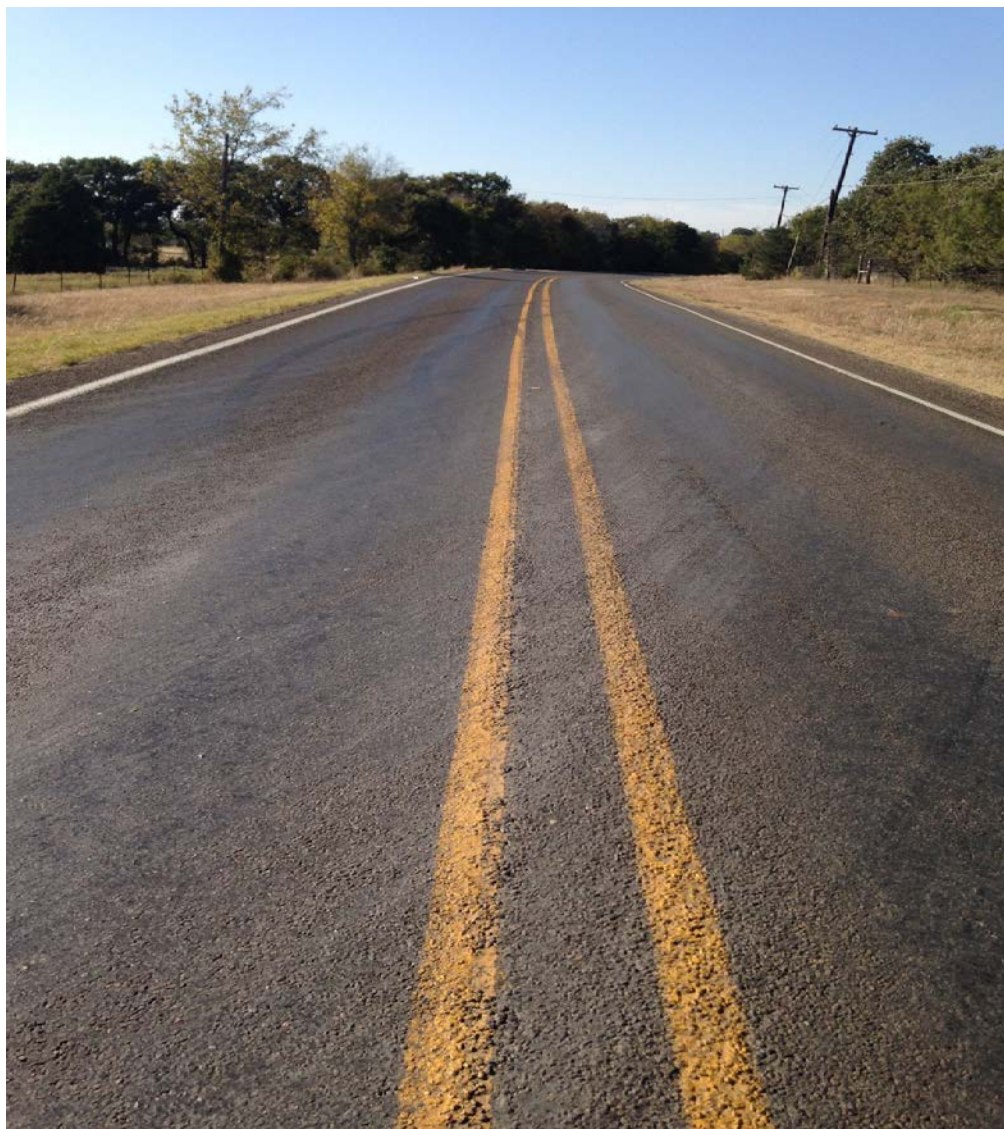


Figure 10. A road. Students can choose either the good road or the bad road.

Isaac's third picture is, according to Isaac, "a big ole stop sign" (Figure 11). He chose that picture because there's always rules. He said "you see a stop sign, you gotta stop. And that made me think of DAEP because you gotta stop being bad, stop joining gangs, stop doing drugs, and stuff like that. Cause there's rules everywhere and there's always consequences."



Figure 11. Stop sign. There are many rules at the DAEP. Students need to STOP being bad.

Isaac's fourth picture is a set of barbells (Figure 12). Isaac said it makes him think of DAEP because lifting weights and working out is hard and the DAEP is hard too. Isaac said lifting weights makes people stronger and attending the DAEP makes people stronger too. He

said, “when people are stronger, they make better choices.” He feels he is now stronger because he has been to the DAEP. It helped him learn respect and to follow the rules of the school and other schools too.



Figure 12. Dumbbells. Weights makes you stronger and so does the DAEP.

Isaac’s fifth picture is a composition book with three pencils are laying on it (Figure 13). He chose this because students are always working. There’s always pencils around. He says he

always works. Students are expected to work as soon as they step in this building and they are expected to work hard. Isaac says, “there’s three pencils right there because there’s always pencils for everyone.” Isaac says while most of the work is academic (math, science, social studies, and English), there are opportunities to work on behavior. He says the work done at this DAEP will “help get your grades up, get your credits, and hopefully make you a stronger person.”



Figure 13. Composition book with three pencils. Students have nothing to do at the DAEP besides to work on their academics and their behavior.

Labron

Background Information

Labron is a 12-year-old seventh-grade male student with a total of three DAEP placements. I asked Labron to tell me what other people might say about him. He said others feel that he is tall for his age. Labron stands about 5 ft. 10 in. Labron declined to tell me anything else about himself besides he is tall. Labron is not sure what he wants to do for a living when he grows up.

Labron lives with his mother and his brother and he tells me that his relationship with them is good. LeBron's father is "not around." Labron declined to go into more detail about his father. Labron's brother had already graduated from high school. His brother has also been assigned to a DAEP while he was in high school for fighting.

Labron has been to the DAEP three times. One time in sixth grade and the two times in seventh grade. Labron said he never received any consequences at home for any of his three placements in the DAEP. He said coming to the DAEP was consequence enough.

Labron said he does not like school and it started in kindergarten. He said the part he does not like about school is "when people like mess with you or distract you from doing your work." He then added the work itself was not the problem, but rather the people, the "social stuff." Labron was then asked what, if anything, he liked about school. He said he likes meeting other people. This made me wonder what aspects of the social part he likes and what part he does not like. He told me it really depends on who the social people are.

Labron was asked where he would rather be if he had to choose his home campus or the DAEP. He said he would rather be back at his home campus. He was then asked, since he would rather be at his home campus, why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to

more DAEP placements. He said he was last sent to DAEP for “beefing” with another student. He said he knew if he fought another student he would be sent to the DAEP. He said he ended up at the DAEP because he “just took it too far.”

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Labron was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. Without hesitation, he firmly stated no. DAEP records show that Labron has good grades, great attendance, and his behavior does not get him in trouble. In fact, Labron typically finishes his placements early due to good behavior.

Labron was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He said at his home campus, “there’s a lot of people and sometimes the teachers kinda pressure you, ‘cause last year when I got sent here, when I was in sixth grade, a lot of teachers started putting pressure on me.” Labron mentioned that the teachers were stricter at his home campus and they want him to work harder. I asked a follow-up question of whether the teachers were stricter with him or everyone. He felt they were stricter with just him because he had already been to the DAEP. He felt he was now being targeted because of his past history and the teachers were waiting for him to misbehave.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Labron was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He mentioned the entire staff at his DAEP was hard working. He says his grades in most of his classes went up during each of his placements. Labron feels the reason they went up

was because he had a better understanding of the content because of his teachers and because there was less of a social life, and pretty much no distractions at DAEP.

Labron was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Labron said he did not get any help before his first two placements, but did get some support prior to his third placement. He mentioned they provided some strategies to help when he would get angry. He then stated, "I guess it did not help, because here I am." I asked Labron if his home campus counselor is supporting him while he is at DAEP. He said no, but his home campus assistant principal had been coming over to visit on occasion. Labron mentioned he does not really talk to her. He did not give me a reason as to why. I asked Labron if his home campus counselor or assistant principal support him when he went back to his home campus. He said no, but that was because he went back to a new campus. Not the campus that sent him. He said his new campus did not even know that he came from a DAEP.

Labron was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Labron said he does not really talk to her as well. He mentioned she has

not made an attempt to go visit with him. He also said the DAEP counselor never supported him after he left the DAEP the first two times.

The Purpose of DAEP

Labron was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP. He said the DAEP can be tough on kids when it comes to behavior and school work. He feels students will not necessarily change because of what the DAEP can do for kids, but because kids just will not want to go back because of how hard the DAEP can be on them.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Labron said, “I don’t really know.” He does not feel the DAEP needs to be harder on students because that would not work for him. He did say it may work for other students because they will say, “I hate that school, I’m never going back.” Labron feels the DAEP needs to offer more counseling to students so students can learn strategies to behave better.

Labron feels the home campus counselors could do a better job at connecting with students when they return to the home campus. He says that would help “because sometimes if you get in trouble, the counselors know why, because you either have anger issues or probably have a disability and the teachers don’t know.”

My last question for Labron was what would he change at the DAEP if he had a magic wand. He said he would change the dress code. He wished he could wear pants with different designs and shoes with colors other than white, black, or gray.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Labron during the course of this study are described below. Labron was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of ‘What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?’

Labron’s first picture has a footprint in some gravel (Figure 14). He mentioned that sometimes students must watch out when they are walking, so they always have to watch their footsteps. I asked him what he was watching out for at the DAEP. He said he is always watching out so that he would not run into other students. He said at the DAEP there is a lot rules, structure, and procedures about how and where students are allowed to walk.



Figure 14. Footprints. Watch out where you are walking and watch your footprints. There is always a process and procedures at the DAEP. High structure.

Labron's second picture has train tracks on it (Figure 15). He used it as an analogy about how students and staff are always tracking student behavior or how students respond to other students and staff at the DAEP. He mentioned this DAEP tracks his behavior on a daily behavior chart that is sent home each day for his parents to review, sign, and return with him on the next school day. Labron mentioned having higher points on his behavior chart results in privileges, such as freedom to talk with others or days being reduced from his overall placement.

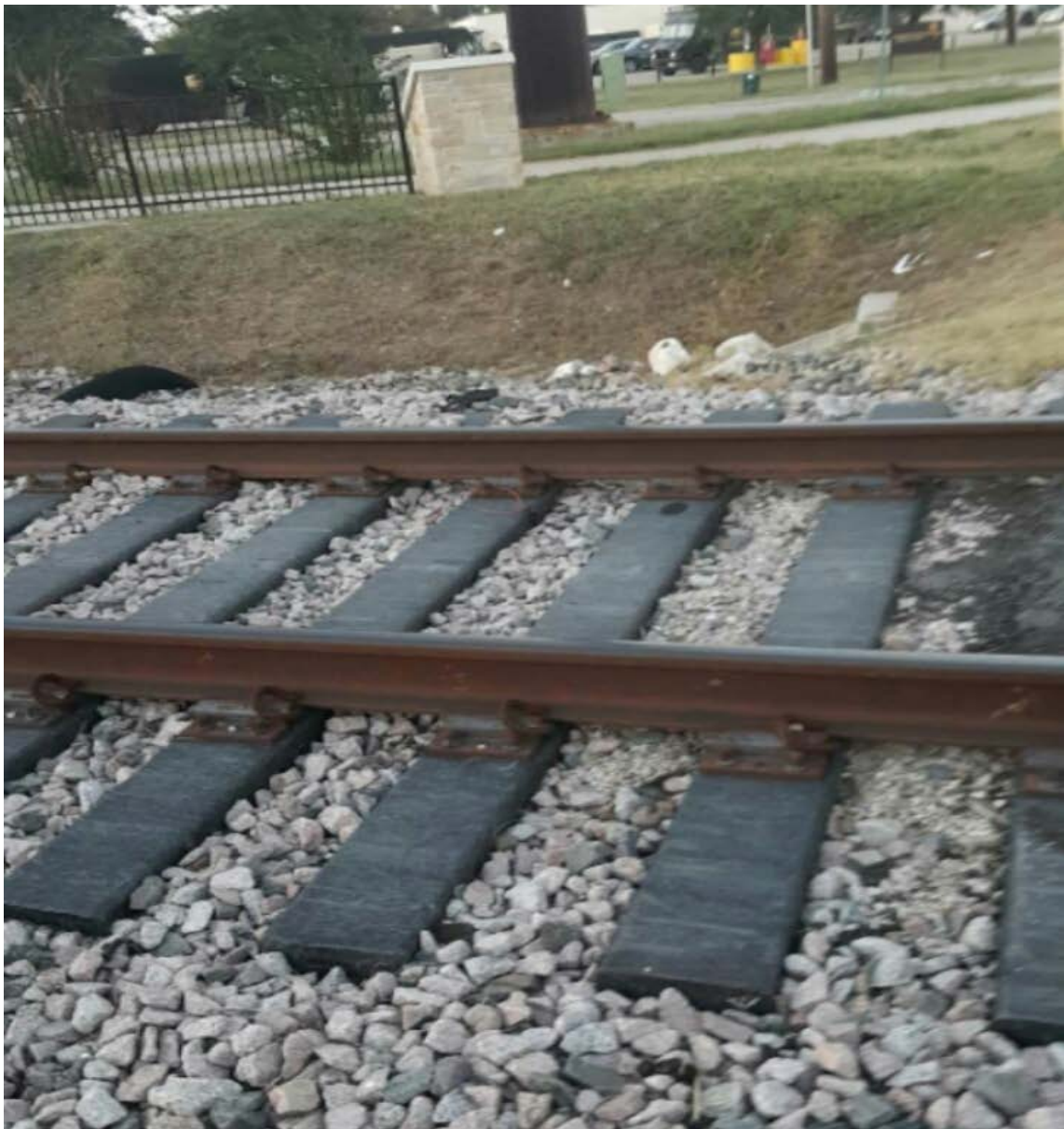


Figure 15. Train tracks. Always track yourself with behaviors and responding to others. DAEP uses point sheets to track behavior. Tracking to say and do the right things.

Labron's third picture has the American flag on it (Figure 16). He says that it represents honor and respect. He feels students should "always honor other people by respecting them." He feels this DAEP expects more respect from students than his home campus does.



Figure 16. American flag. Always honor other people and respond to them. Happens less at the home campus and more at the DAEP. The DAEP expects more respect from students.

Labron's fourth picture shows a house that is being built (Figure 17). This particular house is all studded. There is no drywall or anything like that, it's just a stud frame of a house.

He said it reminds him of the DAEP because DAEPs are supposed to build up a student's behavior. The DAEP is building a student's foundation, much like a house has a foundation. Without a good foundation, the house will not last. He said without a good foundation of behavior, a student will not last either. He also mentioned that sometimes houses need to be remodeled just like students may need to be remodeled. Students may already have a good foundation, they just need some additional work to get them back on track.



Figure 17. Studded house. Working at building up the behavior. It is either the beginning stages or remodeling.

Labron's fifth picture has a big check mark on it (Figure 18). He says students always need to check themselves. He said he always checks himself by "following instructions and do

your work.” Labron also wanted me to know that he drew the check mark and he had to keep redrawing it because he wanted to be sure the lines were straight. He was very proud of the effort he put into this assignment.

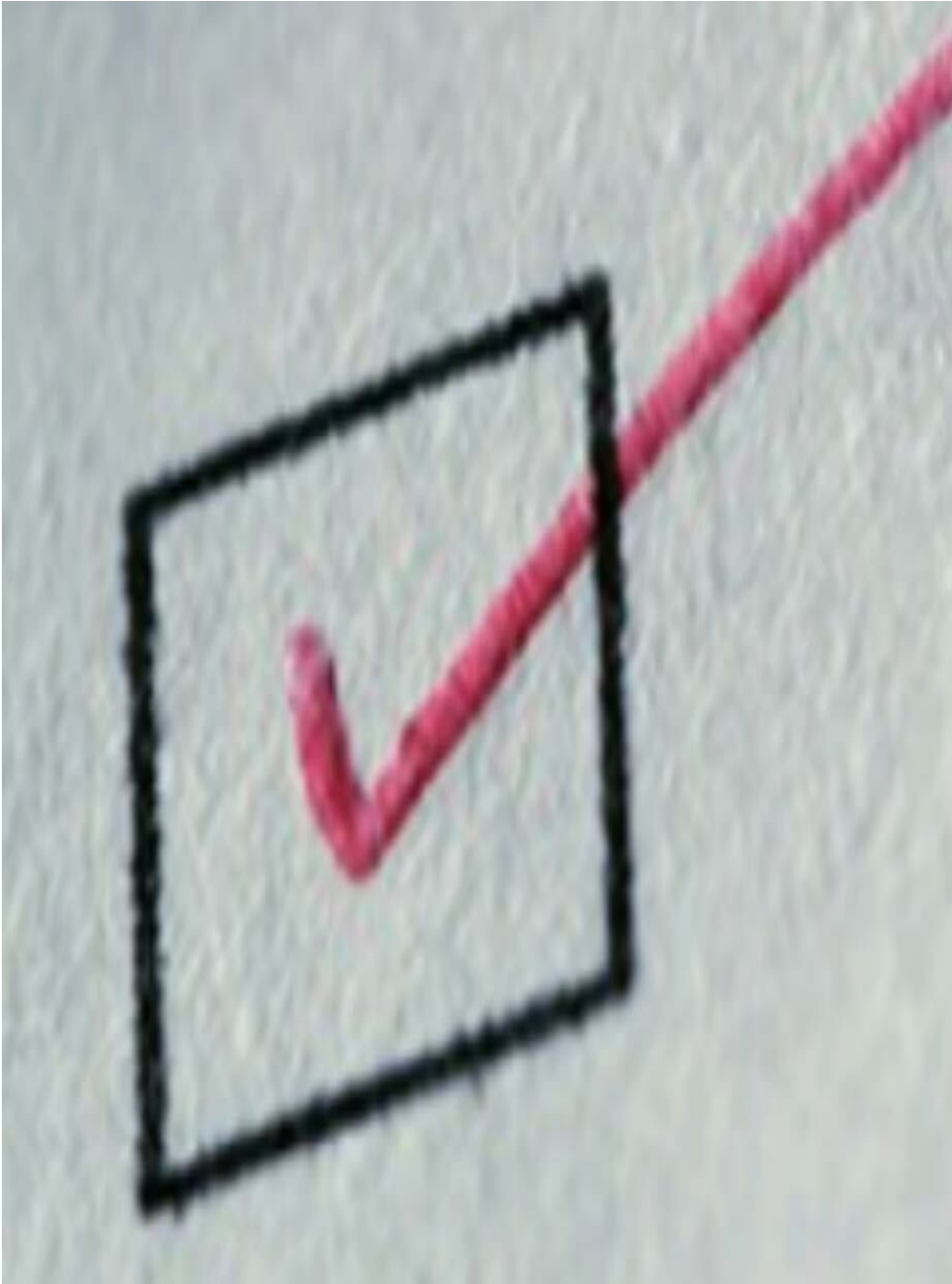


Figure 18. Check mark. Always check yourself. Do your work and follow the instructions.

Luis

Background Information

Luis is a 17-year-old 10th-grade male student with a total of two DAEP placements. He feels that he is nice, funny, hard headed, and has a lot of energy. He lives his life around baseball. He is hoping to be the starting pitcher when he returns to his home campus for the spring semester. He is hoping to be a professional athlete after college. Luis has a part-time job that he works after school from 5:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. most days of the week. Luis lives at home with his mom, sister, and brother.

Luis likes most of his classes at his home campus and loves that he can play sports. He says math has always been a challenge for him. Besides academics, he is involved in baseball, football, and track. Luis tends to get in trouble at school for talking back and not responding appropriately to adults.

Luis has been to the DAEP two times. One time in 10th grade and the other time in 12th grade. Luis's mom took his car away as a punishment for getting into trouble and being sent to the DAEP.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Luis was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He stated for the most part there was not anything that made things hard for him. He said he did have a conflict with one of the teachers, but that can happen at any campus.

Luis was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. Luis has difficulty getting to class on time. He also becomes

argumentative with staff and students.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Luis was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. Luis said, “I love my teachers.” They really understand him and actually want to see him change. He said he was very thankful that they were so helpful.

Luis was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Luis said she came over to the DAEP once a week, she is a great listener, and she kept him on track. Once again, he said he was very thankful for all her support.

Luis was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Luis said his DAEP counselor was a big support when it came to making sure he was good with all his classes and checking on his credit toward graduation. He said he did not talk to her much about his behavior because his home campus counselor was coming over once a week.

The Purpose of DAEP

Luis has three goals that he hopes to work on while he is at the DAEP. He wants help controlling his attitude and his talking back to adults. In addition, Luis is hoping that he is able to increase his attendance. Luis was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP. Luis says that DAEP is supposed to help students think about what they are doing, staying away from problems, and controlling their anger. He stated the DAEP personally helped him change his behavior by pushing him to become a better person and making him see what life is supposed to be. Luis said he has a better attitude now and DAEP made him realize that he needs school to be successful. He now feels he is a good person and appreciates all the support the staff has given him.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Luis feels the DAEP is perfect the way it is. He says students need to be the ones to change and not go back to the way they were (when they misbehaved). He hopes the DAEP staff will keep in touch with him once he leaves and returns back to his home campus. He would love it if the DAEP staff would watch him play baseball. Luis said he is hopeful that his home campus will make him stay on track like the DAEP did, but he realizes that so much of his behavior is truly up to him.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Luis during the course of this study are described below. Luis was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a

discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?” Luis asked if he could submit six pictures. Permission was granted.

Luis’s first picture is of a washing machine (Figure 19). Luis says that the washer cleans up the dirtiness (the bad things in life). He says the DAEP is supposed to clean up students, so they can become cleaner (better behaved students). He feels this placement to the DAEP has done just that. The last time he was at the DAEP did not work for him because he did not care about school and his future. He said his focus was on the streets. This time he is more mature, and he needs to focus so he can go back to his home campus and play baseball. He also mentioned the new rules from the new principal helped him behave better.



Figure 19. Washing machine. The washer cleans up the dirt (the bad things in his life).

Luis's second picture is a picture of cracks in a road (Figure 20). Luis said the road is a path in life. He does not want the cracks in the road to stop his progress moving forward. Because of the DAEP, he now understands what he needs to roll over. He knows if he lets the cracks get too big, he may get stuck. He says he plans to reach out to adults that he trusts if he gets caught in the cracks.



Figure 20. Cracks in the road. The road is the path in life.

Luis's third picture is a cement wall that stands about waist high (Figure 21). He said that wall reminds him of how the DAEP staff teaches students to not let things get in their way and to use mental toughness to scale the wall. Luis is not able to react to some of the small stuff properly that get him in trouble. He also mentioned that in life, he should not try to climb a wall that is too big. He knows if he keeps things in reach and more manageable, he will find more success.



Figure 21. A wall. DAEP helps build up mental toughness.

Luis's fourth picture is a set of train tracks (Figure 22). He states the DAEP knows his past since he has been there before. He knows the staff at the DAEP is tracking his history. Luis told me one of the things the DAEP is supposed to do is guide students down the right track in hopes they will become a better person that makes better choices.



Figure 22. Train tracks. DAEP knows his past since he has been there before.

Luis's fifth picture is a portion of a cement sidewalk (Figure 23). More specifically it is a squared off portion of a sidewalk. He said at the DAEP "it is your own space and there is no student drama to get me into trouble." Students at the DAEP are not supposed to look around and they are supposed to keep to themselves.



Figure 23. The square. It is your own space

Luis's sixth picture is a Do Not Enter sign (Figure 24). He said the DAEP made him think about the bad influences of people in his life. He does not want to be on the streets.



Figure 24. Do not enter. Keeping the bad influences out.

Oscar

Background Information

Oscar is a 16-year-old 10th-grade male student with a total of three DAEP placements. One time in eighth grade, ninth grade, and in 10th grade. Oscar loves soccer and plays for the town he lives in. He does not play for his home campus high school. In addition to soccer, Oscar enjoys listening to music. He mentioned he would like to do construction or play professional soccer after high school.

Oscar has a good relationship with his family. Oscar said that he never received any

home consequences for any of his DAEP placements. He did tell me that his parents gave him a “good talking to.”

Oscar said when it comes to school, he likes math, but he does not like science. He told me that he started not liking school in eighth grade. He said it was because he kept getting into trouble and was expelled from school. I clarified if he meant he was sent to a DAEP and he reiterated that it was not a DAEP, he was expelled.

Oscar was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He mentioned he hung out with the same people and they were a bad influence on him and he was acting in the spur of the moment and was “not thinking” when he misbehaved. He also mentioned that he knew if he got in trouble he might come back to DAEP and he said he definitely did not want to come back.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Oscar was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He was quick to answer that nothing made it hard for him to be successful. When asked why, he said because this DAEP pretty much told him how to act, there was no friends to get him into trouble, and the school helped him make choices.

Oscar was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He restated that his friends on the home campus were a bad influence on him. He also said the classes are too big and he does not get the one-on-one help he needs.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Oscar was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his

DAEP. He stated they were nice and helpful. He felt that he learned from them and they would help him more than his home campus did because of the smaller classes and the one-on-one special education support they provided.

Oscar was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. He said his counselor would try to help him stay out of trouble before he came over to the DAEP because “she would help with me. She’d pull me away from my friends I used to hang out with. She would pull me out.” He acknowledged he did not listen to her. Oscar said she was a big support while he was enrolled at the DAEP. She would sit with him and listen to him about his life. When asked if she helped after he left the DAEP the first three times, he stated, “no, she did not help.”

Oscar was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Oscar said that while he was at the DAEP, the counselor helped by making sure he was in the right schedule. However, Oscar said he never talked to her about behavior or social and emotional issues. Oscar admitted he did not necessarily need her help since his home campus counselor was coming over once a week. Oscar did mention he never got into any trouble nor was referred to the office during his current placement and maybe that is

why the DAEP counselor did not come to see him. He also revealed the DAEP counselor never checked in on him once he left the DAEP and returned to his home campus. He felt there was little transition support before or after he left the DAEP.

The Purpose of DAEP

Oscar was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP. He replied that he felt it could change behavior by students learning how to “behave good and follow the rules.”

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Oscar feels this DAEP is doing what it needs to help students be successful while students are at the DAEP.

Oscar was asked what his campus could do differently to help him be more successful. He said it would also be helpful if the home campus would give him advice, help him stay away from the “bad friends,” and help him focus more in class. Lastly, Oscar said he knows his bad choices are his fault and that ultimately it is up to him to make better choices.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Oscar during the course of this study are described below. He was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Oscar's first picture has a picture of soccer ball on it (Figure 25). He said that playing soccer helps keep him off the streets and helps him forget about the bad things. Oscar mentioned that he played soccer for his home campus, but he cannot play now because students cannot play soccer for the school when they have a DAEP placement. Oscar is looking forward to going back to his home campus soon so that he can play soccer for his home campus during the spring.



Figure 25. Soccer ball. Oscar likes soccer, but cannot play soccer at the DAEP.

Oscar's second picture has a house all by itself in a field (Figure 26). He said the house looked lonely and abandoned and that is how he feels because he does not have any friends at the DAEP. He also said he feels abandoned because he lost a lot of his friends when he came to the

DAEP this time. Oscar told me he plans never to return to a DAEP because he misses his friends too much.



Figure 26. A house in the fields. Oscar feels alone and abandoned because he has no friends at the DAEP.

Oscar's third picture has a bridge that goes over a highway on it (Figure 27). On the bridge it says MLK Jr. He described the picture as a dream and plan for the future. He added that it reminds him of the DAEP because this DAEP is helping to get him in a good path and to

follow his dreams. He had a happy look on his face when he said, “you know, like my education and DAEP is gonna lead me to that.” Oscar feels the education at the DAEP can lead him there because it is better than his home campus. When asked why it was better, he said he gets one-on-one with the teachers at the DAEP.

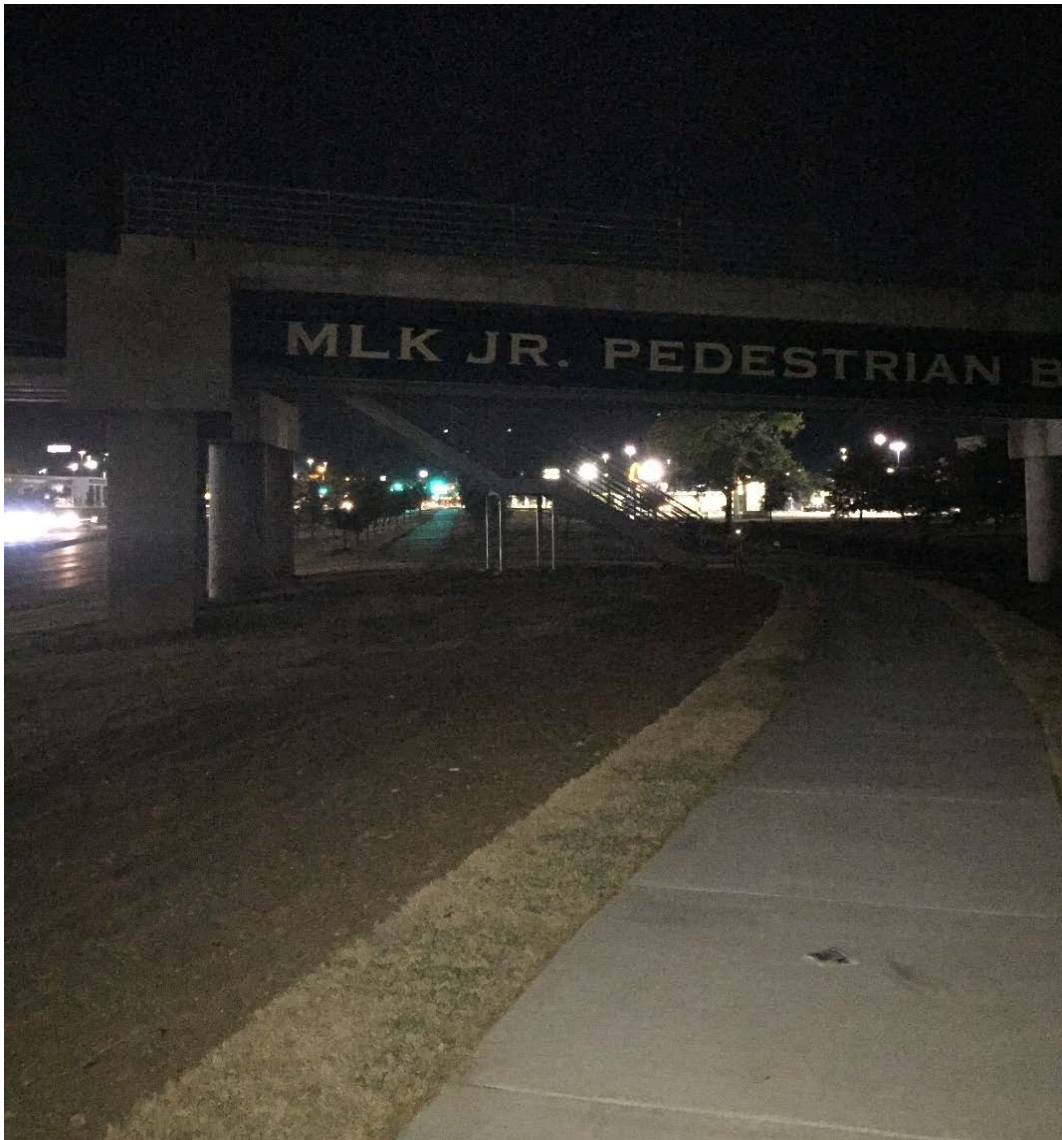


Figure 27. The MLK bridge. DAEP can give students a dream and a plan for the future.

Oscar’s fourth picture has a portable speaker, a CD, and headphones on it (Figure 28). I asked him how that represents the DAEP to him. He said that music helps him not to explode

when he is angry. Oscar listens to music at home and wishes his DAEP would allow students to listen to music to help them relax.



Figure 28. CD, headphones, and a speaker. Oscar uses music to relax.

Oscar's fifth picture has six books on it that he took when he went to the local city library (Figure 29). He said the DAEP represents education and students can learn by reading different

types of books. He mentioned that his grades have gone up every time that he has come to the DAEP and he attributes that to the teachers, the smaller classes, and the high expectations the campus has. He also mentioned his DAEP expects students to work all the time and not play around.



Figure 29. Multiple textbooks. DAEP cares about education and reading.

Peter

Background Information

Peter is a 15-year-old 10th-grade male student with a total of three DAEP placements. Peter is a very shy student that rarely looks at adults in the eyes. Peter hopes to work at a fast

food restaurant when he gets out of high school and then work towards being an electrician.

Peter lives at home with his mom and dad, his three sisters, his little brother, his sister's fiancé and his brother, and 2 two-year old children, all in the same house. Peter feels that his family is a close group and they are supportive. Peter said he did get in trouble at home when he was assigned to attend the DAEP. The first two times his parents took away his phone and did not give it back until summer. This time they took his phone, they do not let him out of the house, and his family lost trust in him. Peter said the consequences were more serious on the third time because his behavior was more serious.

Peter does not like school in general and that began in the ninth grade because he felt he was not learning anything and the goal was just to pass his classes. I asked Peter what he likes about his home campus. He said he really enjoys his chemistry class. When asked about what he likes about the DAEP, Peter said he enjoys his elective classes. He said the reason why he likes the elective classes is because how the teacher works closely with him on his Spanish work. I noticed that both of his responses to why he likes school were both subject or content based. I asked if the social side of school was important to him. He said he did not care for that part because he is a shy child.

Peter was asked what he does not like about his home campus and at the DAEP. He replied, "mostly the crowded rooms" at his home campus and the "very strict rules" at the DAEP. He later contradicted himself by saying he likes the strict rules because it makes it easy to know what to do and what not to do.

Peter has been to the DAEP three times. Two times in ninth grade for skipping school and one time in 10th grade for possession and distribution of marijuana. I asked Peter if he wanted to come back to the DAEP after returning to his home campus. He said the first two

times he did not care if came back because he likes the structure and the smaller class sizes, but this time he is just trying to go back to his home campus and never come back.

Peter was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He said it was mostly for the money he received for selling drugs. He felt selling drugs for money was more important than worrying that if he got caught he would go to the DAEP. He said he knew “the consequence was serious. I knew that if I was caught, I was going to get into more serious trouble,” but he was too focused on the money. He also said he did not think he would get caught. He affirmed the benefit of getting money was, at that time, more important than getting caught and getting in trouble.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Peter was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He, without hesitations stated no. He said his grades went up and that he never got into trouble. However, I noted that attendance could be better. He said yes, but that had nothing to with the DAEP or the way it was run. His absences were because his sister would go and get his girlfriend and they would hang out at home all-day long.

Peter was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He said it was because of the peers he hangs out with, the class were full, and there were too many distractions, so he could not focus on his work.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Peter was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He replied, “The counselors here is nice. The administrators, they’re very helpful. And the teachers, they’re helpful, too.”

Peter was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. He said that he saw his counselor one time out of the entire year and he told her that he wanted to go back to the DAEP. Peter told me the counselors response was that the way he was acting he would be going back and that he needed to get his head out of his ass. He said he did not listen and that “it came in one ear and out the other.” When asked about the support he now receives from her while he is at the DAEP, Peter says she comes over once a week and is very supportive. The counselor tells him things such as what he is doing is taking him down the wrong path. Peter was very clear to mentioned that he did not receive any counseling support at his home campus after he left DAEP his first two times.

Peter was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Peter said she was helpful when he would reach out to her. He would write her a note when he was in a bad mood and then they would visit about anything that was bothering him. Peter said the DAEP counselor never checks up on him on her own and certainly did not when he went back to his home campus.

The Purpose of DAEP

Peter was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP? He said yes, if students will “listen to their rules, responding with yes sir / yes ma’am, use your manners and politeness. And the longer you’re here, the longer it sticks to you.”

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Peter feels the DAEP should be harsher on students that come back more than once. He feels the DAEP should be stricter on how students can earn bonus days if they have already been to the DAEP.

I asked what could his home campus do differently to help him, so he will not come back to DAEP. Peter said to consider more support where the counselors check in with students more often.

My last question for Peter was what would he change at DAEP if he had a magic wand. He stated that he would like to see an easier dress code especially when it came to hairstyles.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Peter during the course of this study are described below. Peter was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Peter’s first picture has the county jail on it (Figure 30). He feels the DAEP is like a county jail because of how secure it is. Peter says he feels like the DAEP treats him as if he is in jail. He said it was not because kids are locked up and cannot leave, but because of the dress

code. This particular DAEP has a strict dress code. Students must have controlled hair of natural color, and not judged distracting. They must wear a plain white shirt (t-shirt, golf shirt, dress shirt) with no other colors or logos; an optional plain gray sweatshirt (with no other colors or logos, no hood, strings, or zippers); plain blue jeans; no belt; black, white, or gray socks; and athletic shoes. Students are not allowed to wear jewelry or have facial hair. Make-up must not be distracting. Students must cover up any tattoos, hickeys, or intentional scarring. To summarize, Peter chose the picture of the county jail because he feels the DAEP dress code makes him feel like he is in a jail.



Figure 30. The county jail. The DAEP feels like a jail.

Peter's second picture has a picture of a stop sign (Figure 31). He said it represents the DAEP because "most of the students here, they didn't stop at the right time to realize where they

were going too far into trouble.” He clarified for me that when students’ bad behavior did not stop, they would get into trouble and he is aware that if students get into trouble they might end up in the DAEP. He said he knows this because that is what has happened to him and his friends.



Figure 31. The stop sign. Peter’s behavior did not stop resulting in him getting in trouble and another placement at the DAEP.

Peter’s third picture has a road with some cars on it taken when it was dark out (Figure 32). He said it represent the DAEP because “students here [DAEP] have a long road ahead of

them to look at their mistakes and learn from them and keep going.” I asked him what happens when students look back at their mistakes. Peter stated that students would then be able to realize where the troubles start and maybe try to avoid them from happening in the future. Peter says that he has done a lot of thinking while at the DAEP and he hopes to make changes and never return to the DAEP.

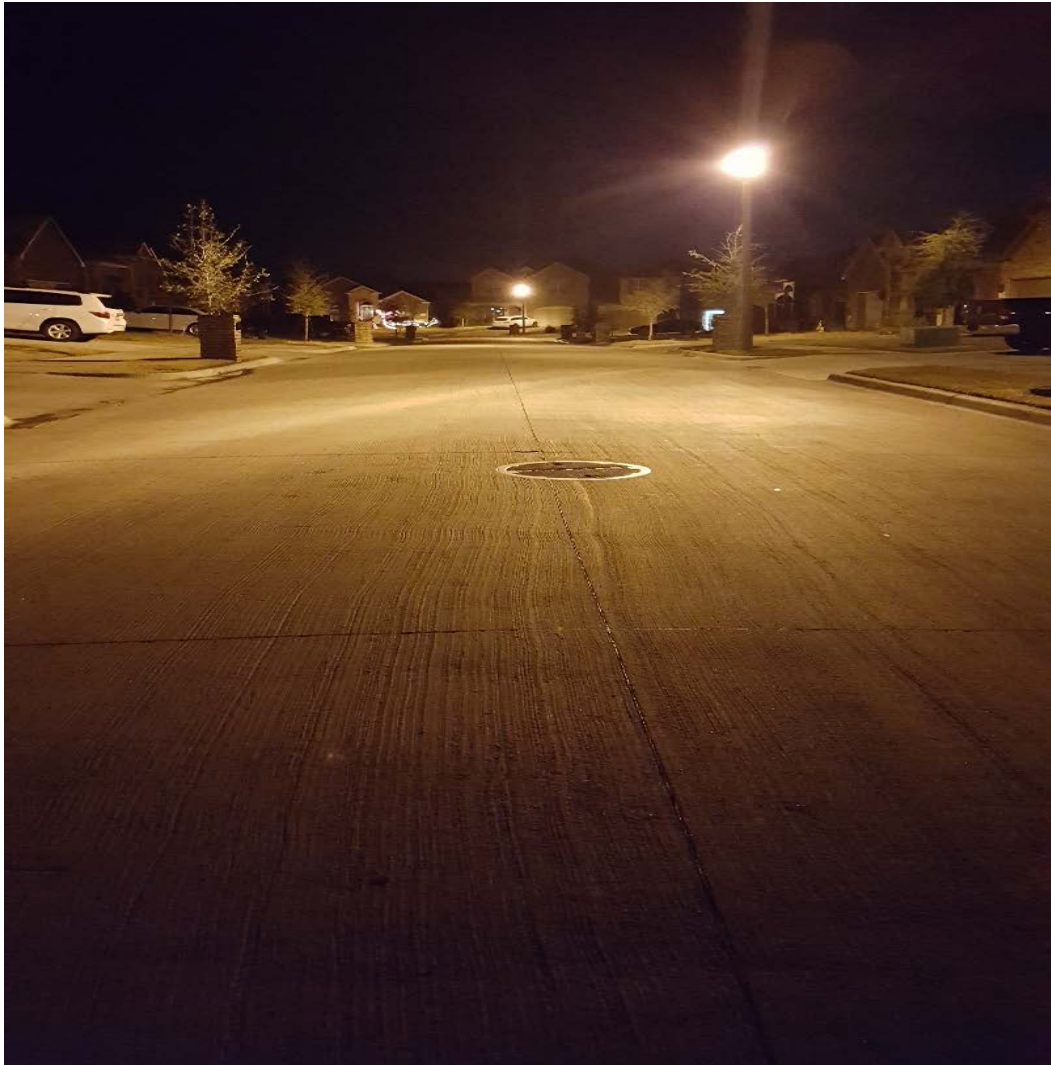


Figure 32. A random street. Students have a long road ahead of them to look back at the mistakes and realize where the trouble started with hopes of avoiding it in the future.

Peter’s fourth picture is a picture of the county’s juvenile probation and detention center (Figure 33). I asked a clarifying question how this was different than his first picture of the

county jail. He said “most of the kids start here. Then, if they keep getting into more trouble they’ll end up in the county jail.” Peter feels the purpose of a DAEP is to help prevent students from going to the juvenile detention center. He also mentioned that he knows the students themselves have to do a lot of the work on themselves, so they do not go there as well. He agreed the DAEPs can help, but the kids really have to be the ones to do the work.



Figure 33. Denton County Juvenile Detention. Lots of students start at a JJAEP and then go to jail. The DAEP can help keep students out of there, but they must want to make that decision.

Peter’s fifth picture is an image he took of a building then added the words “Dallas, Texas – Oak Cliff” (Figure 34). He said it reminded him of the DAEP because kids from Oak Cliff get in more serious types of trouble (such as shootings) than kids that live in his area. Peter

told me his sister and her boyfriend live there. Peter said he is thankful that he does not live in Oak Cliff.



Figure 34. Oak Cliff, Texas. There are more kids that get into trouble in Oak Cliff than where Peter currently lives. It is more dangerous (shootings). Peter used to live and still has family living in Oak Cliff

Phil

Background Information

Phil is a 15-year-old ninth-grade male student with a total of three DAEP placements. Phil says he enjoys sports and other people would say he is good at them. He says he is not able to play sports this year because he keeps getting into trouble. He also mentioned because of his

behavior, his grades went down in multiple classes. Phil lives at home with his mom, dad, two brothers, and one sister. Phil's father has a full-time job and his mother does side jobs like cleaning houses. Phil says he has a good relationship with his parents, but not so much with his brothers. He says that his older brother gets mad a lot and tries to do his own things. Phil's older brother does get in trouble at school. He says his little brother gets mad then cries a lot and is annoying. Phil's sister does not get in trouble at school. Neither of Phil's siblings have been to the DAEP.

Phil says he likes the social aspects of school and that some of his teachers are cool. However, in general, Phil started to not like school in the sixth grade because he did not see the meaning of school. He said he already knew how to read and how to do math. Phil stated, "Why do I need to learn this other stuff? I was like a fast learner, so during sixth grade, I learned a lot of stuff real quick. It got me bored." He said his boredom got him into trouble. He also mentioned he did not like school because of some his teachers.

Phil has been to the DAEP three times. Two times in eighth grade and one time in ninth grade. Phil said his parents took his phone away when he was sent to the DAEP and will get it back when his DAEP placement is finished.

Phil was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He replied,

Well, it's just like when I have problems with the teachers, if I feel like they're disrespecting me, I'm gonna disrespect them 'cause I don't like people getting on to me for things that I didn't do. If they get on to me, I'll talk back to them. It's not just gonna be a one-day thing. If they don't something, I'ma keep being mean to them.

Phil said he had been sent to in-school-suspension approximately 16 times (one of which was for a fight) while he was in sixth grade and was never sent to the DAEP. He then said he was sent to in-school-suspension less times in seventh grade and was never sent to the DAEP.

Phil stated he was in in-school-suspension even less number of times in eighth grade and was still sent to the DAEP for not doing his work and talking back to teachers. He then returned back to his home campus, made a few more mistakes and was quickly sent back to the DAEP. I asked why he thought that happened. Phil feels he is now labeled a trouble maker and they are watching him more closely. I followed that question by asking if his high school knew he was labeled a trouble maker in middle school. Phil stated no. He said, “it’s just that high school is more, they try to get into your learning more, so you can graduate with a good GPA.” He says high school administrators try to “take out the problems so students do not mess with other students”.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Phil was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He said he gets upset when teachers get on to him for stuff he did not do. Phil was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He stated at his home campus, “it’s just difficult cause there’s a lot of people and there’s more freedom.” Also, he knows that “our cell phones distract us because when I was at my regular campus, I would always be using my phone during class.”

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Phil was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He replied, “they’re good. It’s just some teachers get on to you too much” and some “I feel like they don’t know how to teach.” Phil would like to see more teacher interaction from some of his teachers.

Phil was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Phil said that he never received any support from his home campus counselor before he got into trouble and came over to the DAEP. He said he was upset that his counselor only came to see him one time in four weeks while he was placed over at the DAEP. He noticed counselors from other campuses were coming over weekly to visit their students, but his only came to see him once. Phil said his counselors did not reach out to him when he returned to his campus either.

Phil was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Phil said he never talked to her while he was at the DAEP nor when he went back to his home campus.

The Purpose of DAEP

Phil was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP? He said behavior changes, but for different reason for different people. Some people only change for the better while they are at the DAEP simply so they can get out of the DAEP and get back to their home campus as fast as possible. I let him know I was aware his behavior

at this DAEP was very good during this placement. He had no absences, no office referrals, no days under a 70 on his behavior chart, and his grades were better than they were when he arrived. That being noted, I asked why his behavior changed. He said he likes it at the DAEP better than his home campus. Phil says he likes that there are more student-teacher interactions at the DAEP than his own campus because there are less students in each classroom, and because of the school food.

I asked Phil where he would rather be enrolled, the DAEP or his home campus. He said it was 50/50. He likes the teachers at the DAEP, but he misses his friends and freedom of his home campus.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Phil does not see a need for change that would benefit him personally. However, he would like to see the one-time parent orientation be shorter and with comfortable chairs. This hour-and-half DAEP orientation is designed for any student being enrolled to a DAEP and their parent to attend to learn about the procedures, rules, and the reason for the DAEP. He feels the parents should not suffer because of their child's bad choices. Phil also thinks there should be two different orientations. One for students who have never been to a DAEP and one for those that have been there before.

I asked what could his home campus do differently to help him, so he will not come back to the DAEP. He feels "the teachers should have a different temper. Some teachers get mad easily. They get on to you, they send you to the office."

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Phil during the course of this study are described below. Phil was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Phil’s first picture is a picture of a school bus (Figure 35). He says it represents the DAEP because he feels the DAEP bus ride is “very uncomfortable and foreign. I just wish that the route would be different, and it would go in a better pattern.” All students from the DAEP must take a bus to school each morning. Phil says he lives close to his home campus, so he is used to walking to school. Also, his bus takes kids from school, pretty much past his stop, drives 30 minutes south to another stop, and then comes back another 30 minutes north to drop him off (which is also where the busses park for the night). Phil says he knows all students must ride a bus to and from the DAEP for safety and supervision reasons, he just wishes he could be dropped off sooner than later.



Figure 35. School bus. Riding the bus is uncomfortable and far.

Phil’s second picture is a book (Figure 36). There is no title to the book. He said that it represents the DAEP because he can focus better at the DAEP. Phil says they are able to read during lunch when they finish eating as well. He says it helps him focus on the book and not be

uncomfortable. This DAEP does not allow students to talk during lunch. When done eating, students can either put their head down or read. He wishes they could read at breakfast time as well.

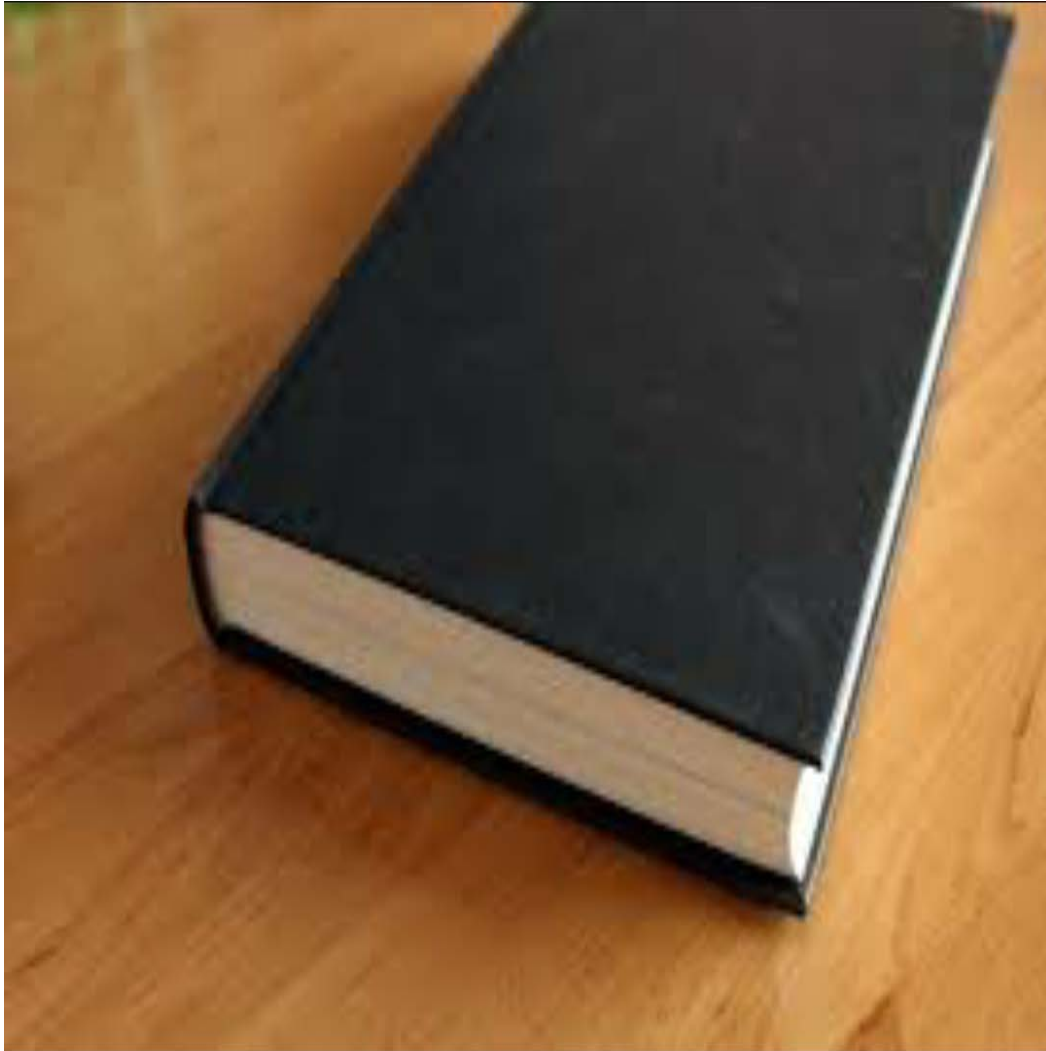


Figure 36. Textbook. Students at the DAEP focus more.

Phil's third picture is an image of cars at a busy intersection (Figure 37). He says it makes him think of the DAEP because the traffic slows the DAEP bus ride down and students get home late. He also states this becomes bothersome when there are no students on the bus that day that need to go to certain stops because the driver has to alter the route and his mom never knows exactly when the bus will drop him off. Phil says there can be a 30-minute

difference and that can occur on a daily basis. Phil mentioned the DAEP students cannot bring cell phones on the bus or to school and that there is no way to call his mother if he is going to be early or late to the bus stop.



Figure 37. The intersection. There is lots of traffic on the roads which means students ride the bus too long.

Phil's fourth picture is another picture of a bus (Figure 38). Phil says that he has to walk to his bus stop and sometimes it is too cold or too hot and it is too far. He said that DAEPs do not have a lot of bus stops and they are too far apart. Students have to pick a stop that is closest to them and that may be a 30-minute walk or they might have to get a ride from their parents to the bus stop.



Figure 38. Waiting for the bus. Phil walks a long way to the bus stop.

Phil's fifth picture is a tray of food with a piece of pizza, chocolate milk, and an apple (Figure 39). He feels it represents the DAEP because the food at the DAEP is really good because it comes right out of the oven and it is hot and fresh. He believes it is hotter and fresher at the DAEP because the campus is much smaller. This DAEP holds about 100 students where his middle school holds about 900. He also feels since some students can talk at lunch for being on a certain behavior level that students should have the same opportunity during breakfast.

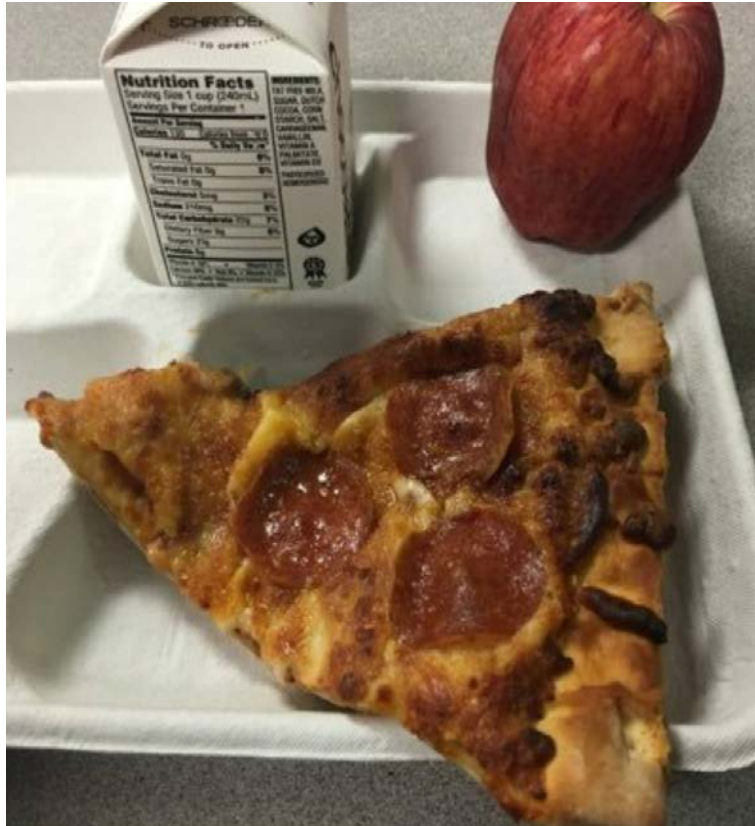


Figure 39. School lunch. Food is really good at the DAEP because there are less students and it is fresher.

Phil and I reviewed all five pictures at the end of his interview and we noticed that all of the five pictures dealt with things outside of the classroom. Even the book picture dealt with the cafeteria. Phil told me it was because he “feels like the classroom is just good. They do good in there.” He said all five pictures are things he wishes would change at the DAEP.

Samantha

Background Information

Samantha is a 15-year-old ninth-grade female student with a total of four DAEP placements. When asked to describe herself she told me she had red hair. She says that she is Mexican although many people think she is White. Samantha is really close with her entire family. Samantha plans to be a police officer or study cosmetology after high school. She lives

with her parents, her sister-in-laws, and her nephews. Samantha's best friend is her mother.

Samantha likes school for the most part. Her favorite subject is algebra. She likes that she can use her cell phone during school while at her home campus. Samantha likes the fact she can focus more on her studies while at the DAEP because the DAEP does not allow her to bring her phone to school. Samantha does not like to wake up early; the DAEP starts school at 7:20 a.m. and her high school starts at 8:50 a.m. Samantha does not like her teachers sometimes because they can be too mean to her.

Samantha has been to the DAEP four times. One time each in sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. Samantha did get some at-home consequences when she was sent to DAEP. Her parents had many conversations with her, she was grounded, and could not go out to walk around or party. She said the grounding was the hardest part. Samantha was able to keep her phone each time she was sent to DAEP so her family could reach her.

Samantha was asked why she continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. Samantha was sent to the DAEP this time for stealing phones out of lockers in the girl's locker room. Samantha felt she would not get caught stealing and therefore not be sent to the DAEP. However, she told me that later, as she was doing it, she might get caught, but she continued to steal knowing her possible consequences. When asked about all four times of being sent to the DAEP, Samantha said she did not think she would get caught or she was hanging out with friends who were making poor choices.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Samantha was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for her to be successful at the DAEP. Samantha said getting suspended from the DAEP makes it hard.

A majority of Samantha's suspensions begin with dress code issues, then she becomes argumentative and disrespectful, and disrupts the class. Students that get suspended have to makeup work they missed, they lose any points they have earned toward privileges, and they must make up any days they missed of school at the end of their placement,

Samantha was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for her to be successful at her home campus. Samantha indicated her friends and her phones get her into trouble.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Samantha was asked to describe her teachers, her counselors, and her administrators at her DAEP? She said the teachers can sometimes be strict, but they have their reasons, the counselor is nice, and the administration is hard on students but that is their job.

Samantha was then asked how much support she was receiving from her home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Samantha said that her middle school home campus counselor did not provide her supports before her DAEP placement, but she did come over to the DAEP while she was there. She is waiting to find out if her high school counselor will support her as Samantha is new to that school and has yet to meet her.

Samantha was then asked how much support she was receiving from her DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students

enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Samantha said her DAEP counselor would talk to her and would help her figure things out. However, the DAEP counselor did not connect with Samantha any of the times she went back to her home campus.

The Purpose of DAEP

Samantha was asked if she thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at a DAEP? Samantha answered yes because maybe the students will not like the rules of the DAEP or waking up early. Samantha indicated the behavior would change so people would not go back to the DAEP, not because they want to do better for the right reasons.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help her, so she will not come back to it. I asked Samantha if she would rather be at her home campus or at the DAEP. She said sometimes she does and sometimes she does not. Samantha would like to see more opportunities for students to earn privileges. She would like to see students earn days off their placement if they are behaving and attending school on a regular basis. Maybe students will behave better at the DAEP and bring their new behavior back to the home campus with them. She told me that it is all a student's choice and if they want to behave they will.

I asked what could her home campus do differently to help her, so she will not come back to the DAEP. Samantha's grades tend to go up when she is at the DAEP. She feels that if she can get more academic support so her grades go up at her home campus, she might try harder to

stay there. Samantha told me she does not plan to come back to the DAEP for a fifth time because she plans on graduating from her home campus.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Samantha during the course of this study are described below. Samantha was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Samantha’s first picture is a thinking Emoji face (Figure 40). When asked how that made her think of the DAEP, she replied, “because I think of every move down here.” I asked a clarifying question to find out if she meant everything she thinks, everything you say, everything you physically move, or a combination of the three. She clarified and said the DAEP students need to think about everywhere they physically move their body. I asked her why her DAEP makes her think about her movement. She said it was for safety reasons and she understands why that is necessary.



Figure 40. Thinking face. DAEP students must think of every move they make.

Samantha's second picture has an outdoor thermometer showing 24 degrees Fahrenheit (Figure 41). Samantha said she chose that picture because it is always cold in the cafeteria or in the classroom. She said she does wear a DAEP approved sweatshirt all day, regardless of how hot or cold it may be outside, because it is always cold in the building. She wishes she could wear different clothes, but did not want to see the temperature raised in the building. She would also like to see this DAEP allow students to wear more comfortable clothes on Fridays as an incentive if they are doing well on campus.

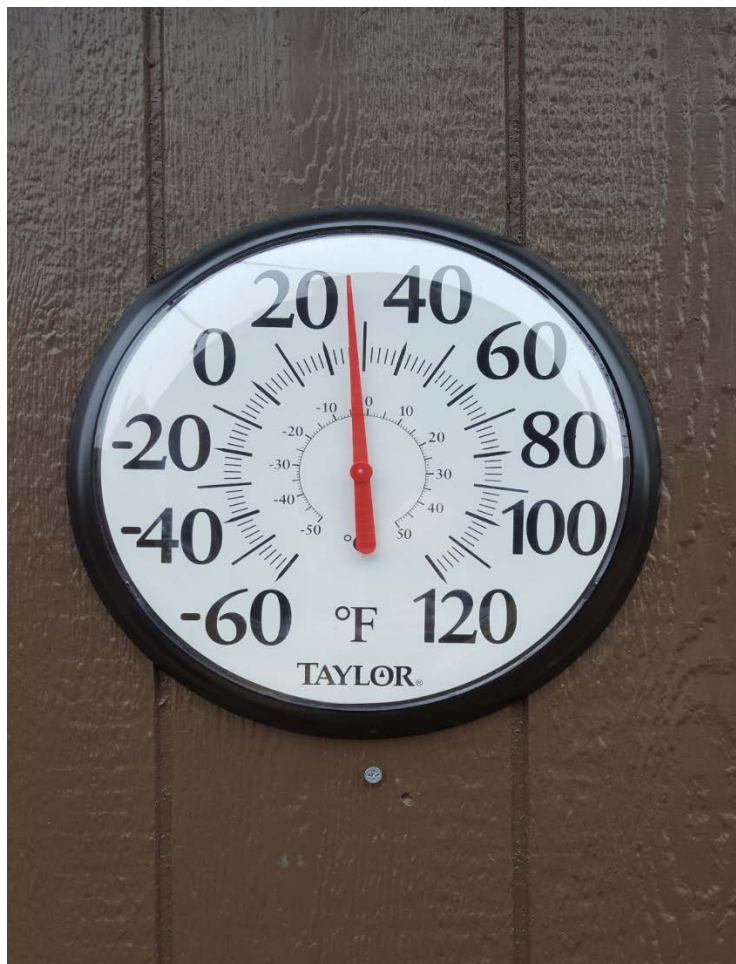


Figure 41. The thermometer. Always cold at the DAEP.

Samantha's third picture shows a pair of black athletic shoes (Figure 42). She chose to take this picture because those are the style of shoes she can wear at the DAEP. Students are

only allowed to wear black, white, or gray athletic shoes with no other colors on them.



Figure 42. Sneakers. Black sneakers are part of the DAEP dress code.

Samantha went on to talk more about the dress code in general. Students must have controlled hair that is of natural color, and not judged distracting. They must wear a plain white shirt (t-shirt, golf shirt, dress shirt) with no other colors or logos; an optional plain gray sweatshirt (with no other colors or logos, no hood, strings, or zippers); plain blue jeans; no belt; black, white, or gray socks; and athletic shoes. Students are not allowed to wear jewelry or have facial hair. Make-up must not be distracting. Students must cover up any tattoos, hickeys, or intentional scarring. When asked if the dress code made sense to her she said, “it can make sense

sometimes but not always.” She feels the pants rules restriction is too much. She would like more freedom on the style of pants to wear. She also feels some students may never want to come back to the DAEP, but the dress code was not enough of a deterrent to keep her from coming back.

Samantha’s fourth picture a black Sharpie and a finger that is covered in black Sharpie (Figure 43). Samantha says the DAEP expects students to use Sharpies to cover up tattoos, hickeys, and intentional scarring. Samantha said it is very stressful at times because “sometimes I forget to cover up my tattoos or stuff and by the time I’m in the car or something, when I’m about to get dropped off at the bus stop, it’s like, ah, man, I need a sharpie now.” Samantha feels the dress code is the most stressful part about coming to the DAEP.



Figure 43. Black sharpie. Must cover up tattoos.

Samantha’s fifth picture has 2 two-way radios (Figure 44). She says they represent the DAEP because teachers use the radios to call for someone to get somebody removed whether

they are in trouble or not. Samantha tells me the reason students get removed from class is because they are disrupting class. Once removed, the remaining kids can keep on learning.



Figure 44. Two walkie talkies. Teachers' main communication with administration to remove students.

Sasha

Background Information

Sasha is a 17-year-old 12th-grade female student with a total of two DAEP placements. Sasha feels she is an easy person to talk to. This became evident throughout her interview. Sasha would like to go to college after high school and study psychology because she wants to

know how the human mind works. Her relationship with her family is pretty close. They have little problems now and then, but she feels they are problems that most people have. Sasha lives with her mom, her older brother, and older sister. Her siblings have made mistakes before but neither of them have been to a DAEP before. Sasha did not want to go into detail about the mistakes they had. She just wanted me to know that her siblings are not bad kids, they just made mistakes.

Sasha likes school sometimes and does not like school other parts of the time. English is her favorite subject and she hates math and science. I told Sasha that I found it interesting that when I asked what she likes about school, her answers had to do with her academics, her classes. She said she answered that way because school is for learning, not for friends. Sasha told me “most people they’re like, yeah, because I get to talk to my friends. But I don’t see it that way. School, my mom tells me all the time, she’s like, school is for learning not for your friends.” Sasha said she hates math more than she hates people because if she “was good at math, I’d be happy. I wouldn’t probably even be a problem if I was good at math.” She feels if she could get more help in math, the next few months as a high school senior would be very easy for her.

Sasha has been to the DAEP two times, both times for drug issues. One time in 11th grade and this time as a senior in high school. Sasha received at-home consequences for being sent to the DAEP. She got a spanking from her mother, her phone was taken away, and she was not allowed to listen to her music.

Sasha was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. Sasha was being careless and did not think she was going to get caught nor did she care about the consequences.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Sasha was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for her to be successful at the DAEP or at her home campus. Sasha said no. She can do very well when she wants to. She simply made a bad choice, got caught, and was sent to the DAEP as her consequence.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Sasha was asked to describe her teachers, her counselors, and her administrators at her DAEP? She replied with a one a word answer, “helpful.” She had no other words to describe them.

Sasha was then asked how much support she was receiving from her home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Sasha said her home campus counselor did not help her prior to coming to the DAEP because she did not know her and know that she was going to get into trouble. Her home campus counselor did help her while she was at the DAEP. Sasha and her counselor would have some stress-free talks about how she felt. Sasha felt these talks were beneficial to her overall demeanor. Sasha also mentioned that just being at the DAEP helped her relax and feel more confident about herself. I asked Sasha if her home campus counselor helped her after she left the DAEP. Sasha said, “yes and no.” Sasha never went back to talk to her, but it helped knowing she was there in case she needed help.

Sasha was then asked how much support she was receiving from her DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is

responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Sasha said that she has never spoken to or even knows who the DAEP counselor is. Sasha did tell me she had no troubles at the DAEP which may be the reason that she never saw or spoke to the counselor. Sasha told me the DAEP counselor did not support her when she went back to the DAEP.

The Purpose of DAEP

Sasha was asked if she thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP? She said that some people stop doing what brought them to the DAEP and they never return to the DAEP. Most students do not like coming to the DAEP, so just by being at a DAEP one time, they change their ways so they will not go back to a DAEP again.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help her, so she will not come back to it. Sasha feels the DAEP should provide more social, emotional, and drug counseling. She feels the home campus leaders need to do a better job of connecting with the students and helping them stay on track. She said this could be done by seeing if students are going to class every day.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Sasha during the course of this study are described below. Sasha was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What

does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?” Sasha asked if she could submit six pictures. Permission was granted.

Sasha’s first picture is a one-way road (Figure 45). The one-way road represents the DAEP because students need to make good decisions when they come to a DAEP. She also recalled that during the DAEP orientation, the principal talked about a fork in the road where students have to make life choices by taking the right road (good choices) or taking the bad road (bad choices). She feels the DAEP is “basically like a one-way road to making good decisions because you can only do good here” because the DAEP helps students make choices.



Figure 45. A one-way road. One-way road to make good choices.

Sasha’s second picture has construction equipment on it (Figure 46). Sasha stated it represents the DAEP to her because “when you’re building something, you trying to make something new and better” and students make better decisions when they come to the DAEP than they did at their home campus. She also added students become a new person while at the

DAEP. She was very surprised to see how well the bad kids were behaving when she arrived at the DAEP. I asked her to clarify that for me. She told me “because at my old school, they were up there doing bad things. You know, fighting. But they’re doing good here.”



Figure 46. Construction tractors. DAEPs allow students to build new and better behavior while at a DAEP.

Sasha’s third picture has to do with a recycle bin and a trash bin that homeowners put out by their street (Figure 47). Sasha was very quick to tell me that she was not calling out students and calling them trash. She used that analogy when things are thrown away, it can be recycled into something new. Sasha said,

So, it’s kind of like when people they come over here and they change their habits, so they’re like brand new. And you throw away the bad habits. Well, some people throw away the bad habits and they make new ones and use them at the old school.



Figure 47. Trash and recycle bins. DAEPs can recycle bad habits to make new stuff (better behavior).

Sasha's fourth picture has plants on it (Figure 48). DAEPs teach students to create healthy habits. The school is designed to allow students to make good choices so students' behavior increases. Sasha states the DAEP gives students "the choice to start making good habits and then you start growing because it's basically like feeding the person to make good choices." Sasha also stated,

if you don't feed the plant, if you don't water the plant, it's gonna die, so that's why I took a picture of plants. Because they grow. Same thing for a person. You gotta grow. You make bad choices like if you wanna not feed the plant, fertilizer and all that, and water, it's gonna die. The same way with people.



Figure 48. Plants. DAEPs provide good choices to make good habits to grow into something good.

Sasha's fifth picture is a watermelon (Figure 49). The watermelon was chosen because it has a hard shell on the outside and the inside is soft. Sasha used that as an analogy to people because "some of the people, they try to act hard but on the inside, they're soft. They got a soft spot." I asked Sasha what the purpose of the DAEP was. She said,

It kinda shows that the student can do better. Like them fighting or being violent or doing drugs isn't them. They've just put on a front. Like they put on a shield, I guess, so they don't get hurt. That's why people do the things they do. Like the toughest guy can be the softest person to his family.



Figure 49. A watermelon. Watermelons have hard shells on the outside while the inside is soft. People try to act hard on the outside and are soft in the middle.

Sasha's sixth picture was about drug addiction and substance abuse (Figure 50). Sasha states she does not do drugs, but she has seen how it can affect some of her friends and other students at her home campus. Sasha shared a story with me,

Some people they can be like popping pills all the time and that's not good. Because I know some people who are like that and those pills sometimes can cause their actions. I don't do those, I don't do pills, but I know some people that she told me a story, she was on Xanax, they call them bars. And she would try to fight everybody, so she told me that basically when you're on that, you think you can do anything. So that can be like a cause too. I know somebody who came here because of that. Because she was trying to fight people and she was just doing crazy things.

Sasha said her picture applies to the DAEP because DAEPs are supposed to provide counseling to help students not to do drugs anymore.

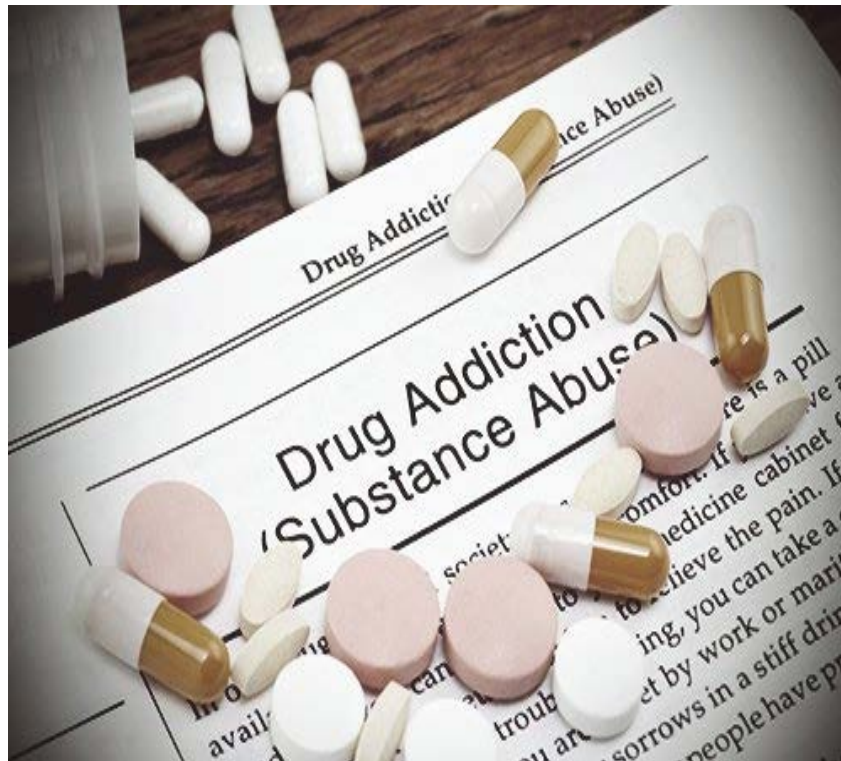


Figure 50. Substance abuse. DAEP needs to provide more drug counseling.

Tony

Background Information

Tony is a 13-year-old seventh-grade male student with a total of two DAEP placements. One time in sixth grade and again in seventh grade. Tony enjoys playing football and soccer. He planned on playing soccer for his school's club team called GOAL, but he cannot now because he has a DAEP placement. GOAL stands for Guys Operating as Leaders. It is a program designed for at-risk male students to help them become leaders on their campus and hopefully move these students in the right direction. Tony said he never actually became part of the team because he was sent to the DAEP before getting on it. Tony does plan to go to college, but he is not sure what for yet. He told me he is only in seventh grade and he has time to think about it.

Tony lives with his mom and his older brother. Tony's older brother has been to this DAEP three times already. In fact, both Tony and his brother have been to the DAEP at the same time for both of Tony's placements. This time however, Tony was sent by his middle school, but his brother was sent by his high school. Two different schools, sending two siblings to the DAEP at the same time.

Tony says he enjoys school, but he could not tell me what he likes about. He just generally likes school. He did say his friends are important to him, but that is not what he thought about when I asked him what he likes about school because his friends have nothing to do with "school." Tony does not like the fact that he must get up to go to school so early in the morning. He said things started getting more difficult for him in the sixth grade. He felt his academics came easy to him in elementary school, but became harder to him in middle school. Math became especially hard for him.

Tony has been to this DAEP two times. Tony said he did not receive consequences at home for being sent to the DAEP. His family felt coming to a DAEP was punishment enough. Tony was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He said he was not thinking straight. Tony woke up one morning and went to school and did not check himself or his belongings. Tony had been out the night before and forgot to take his drugs out of this backpack before he went to school. Tony said if he remembered to move it, he would not have been caught and he would not have been sent to the DAEP. He was simply careless.

Home Campus and DAEP

Tony was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. Tony said no. Tony's grades went up, his attendance was good, he

was able to follow the rules, and earned bonus days off his placement so he could go back to his home campus earlier than expected.

Tony was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. Tony said there was nothing that made it hard for him at his home campus. His behavior is stuff he is doing outside of school that he brings to school. He then gets caught while at school. If he did not get caught at school, he would be successful. His grades were good and his everyday behavior was not a problem.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Tony was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. Tony said the DAEP teachers taught him more than they did at his middle school campus because they are more caring, and they take the time to work with him. Tony said he has not met the DAEP counselor. Tony feels the assistant principal at the DAEP is nice, but they are hard on the students. Tony said the DAEP principal is nice and that his goal is for students to be successful, so they can get back to their home campus and stop making bad choices.

Tony was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Tony said his home campus counselor did not provide him with any behavioral supports prior to him coming to DAEP because he was doing well in school and they did not need to help him. However, they did come over one time each week to support him while he was at the DAEP. Tony said he did not see her much after he left the DAEP. They saw each other in the hallway in passing.

Tony was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Tony said his DAEP counselor did not help him during or after his DAEP placement.

The Purpose of DAEP

Tony was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP? He said probably. He feels the structure and the loss of activities that students experience may be a reason some students will change their behavior. He said, “because you can’t play sports, walk to class alone, talk to your friends, and stuff. You have to have points and stuff.”

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Tony said, “I don’t really know, to be honest. I guess I would just stop doing what I did last time and think twice before I do stuff.” Tony thinks the DAEP should provide ways for students to stop and think twice before they act. I asked what his home campus could do differently to help him, so he will not come back to the DAEP. He feels that having the counselors check up on him more often might help.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Tony during the course of this study are described below. Tony was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of ‘What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?’

Tony’s first picture has a sheets of notebook paper with the sentence ‘I will not argue with my mom’ written on it over 100 times (Figure 51). I asked him how this picture represents the DAEP. He said, “mostly what we do here is just do work and stuff. We don’t have time to be playing games. When you’re at your home campus, you can play games, but here all you do is just work, work, work.” Tony said his mother made him write these words when he got out of juvie (juvenile justice program).

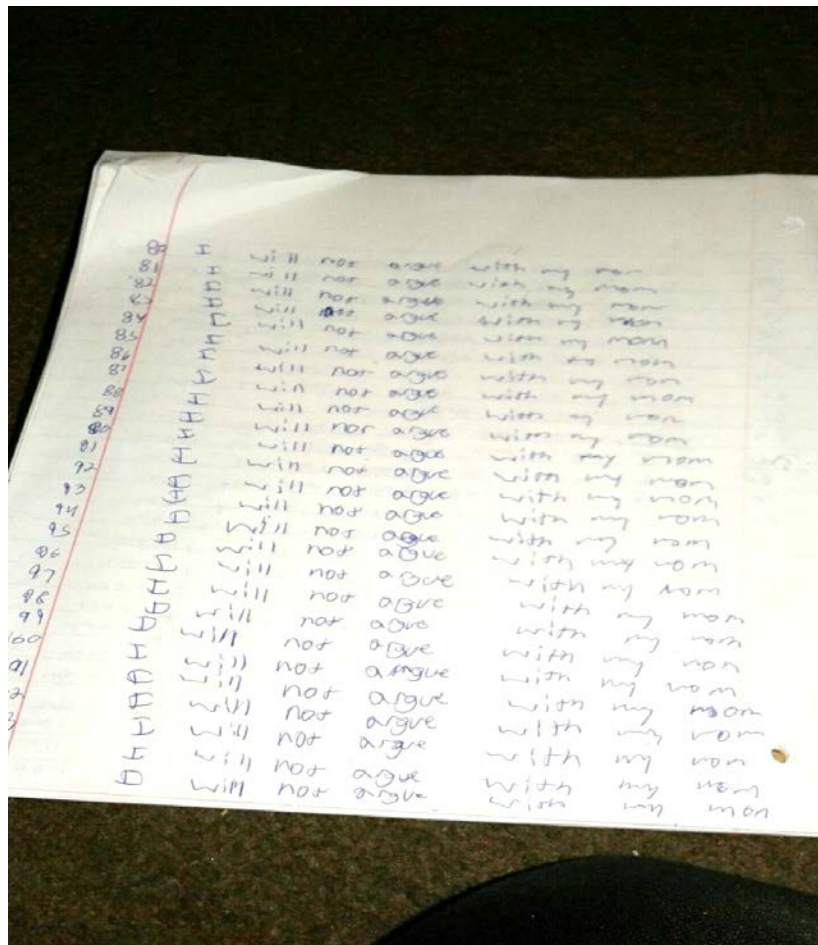


Figure 51. I will not argue with my mother. All we do at the DAEP is work.

Tony's second picture is a picture he took off his phone that designates that talking is not allowed (Figure 52). Tony states at the DAEP, students

can't talk to no one else. The only person you can either talk to is the teacher, principal, assistant principal, someone that works here. You can't be talking to no one in your classroom. When you're at your home campus, you can talk to your friends and stuff. Here, you can't talk to no one.



Figure 52. No talking. There is no talking unless you are talking to teachers.

Tony's third picture has a school bus on it (Figure 53). Tony says it relates to the DAEP because if a student misses the bus to the DAEP, they cannot come to school and they have to make up that day before they can go back to their home campus.



Figure 53. Missing the school bus. If students miss the bus, they cannot come to the DAEP that day.

Tony's fourth picture has two meerkats on it (Figure 54). Tony says the picture is showing that one of the animals is looking around and the other is not. This relates to the DAEP because students are not allowed to look around. If they do, students can get into trouble.



Figure 54. Two meerkats. Looking around at the DAEP is not allowed.

Tony's fifth picture is an image he pulled off his computer (website unknown), that shows a man in extreme cold weather (Figure 55). Tony reflected about the DAEP:

In the mornings on the bus, it's like really, really cold. Then in the lunchroom, it's cold in there. The cool out room, it's cold in there, too. Bring a jacket or something, but all right, if we just to stay at our home campus, we like wear a jacket all day.

Tony later mentioned that he supposes if he wants to be warm, he should stay out of trouble and never come back to the DAEP again.



Figure 55. A cold man. The DAEP is a cold place.

Victor

Background Information

Victor is a 15-year-old 10th-grade male student with a total of three DAEP placements. Victor describes himself as someone that has a good personality and is a positive thinker, but someone who also finds trouble. Victor used to do drugs and come home high. Victor hopes to be a musician when he gets older. Victor lives with his mom, stepdad, sister, and stepbrother. He has a total of four siblings, two of which live with his father.

Victor says he likes school for the most part and appreciates that it is not a jail. He had recently been to jail and never wants to go back there. His favorite subject in school is chemistry. Victor does not participate in any extra-curricular activities at this home campus. He is not a big fan of geometry because he feels most of the math he is learning is pointless. Victor tells me he gets in trouble at school for doing drugs and he lets his pride get the best of him.

Victor has been to the DAEP three times. His DAEP placements occurred in sixth grade, ninth grade, and now in 10th grade. This DAEP placement for Victor occurred because he was caught with drugs on his campus two times in two days. Victor said his parents took away his phone and put him on house arrest after he got caught with drugs and sent to the DAEP.

Victor was asked why he continued to make bad choices that might lead to a DAEP placement. He said he was not thinking. He had been doing drugs prior to getting caught and was not concerned about the consequences. However, this time resulted in him coming to the DAEP and him being arrested.

Home Campus and DAEP Experiences

Victor was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to

be successful at the DAEP. Victor said the academic side of school was not hard for him. His home campus sent him to the DAEP in the past for drug use so now they are always trying to catch him doing wrong. If the school felt he was under the influence they would give him a sobriety screening to confirm if he was or not. In addition, his campus would do random searches of his belongings to make sure he was not carrying any drugs.

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Victor was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He likes most of teachers at the DAEP. He feels like he has learned much more while at the DAEP than at his home campus. Victor attributes this to his teachers; they tend to teach more and seem more professional than they do at his home campus. He also mentioned that his teachers at the DAEP are all business and do not invade his privacy.

Victor was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student counsels with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Victor said he was able to visit his home campus counselor on the average of one time per week. He was asked if her weekly support was helpful in making good choices. He replied: “She was helpful, but sometimes, personal and family matters build up too much and I let that get the best of me.”

Victor was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students

enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. He said he has only spoken to her one time since he was enrolled at the DAEP. Victor said she seems nice and would like to reach out to her and speak with her. He feels that, while at the DAEP, he does not need to see her much because he is getting a lot of support from the home campus counselor.

The Purpose of DAEP

Victor was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at the DAEP. Victor is hoping the DAEP can support him in making sure he is thinking clearly. His goals are to learn strategies that will give high marks on his behavior chart, so he can go back to his home campus early and to make his mother proud. He is also hoping that with help from the DAEP staff, his counselor, his family, and his probation officer that he will stop being a drug user for good. However, he feels that a lot of the decisions, for a student to make a positive change, are ultimately up to the student themselves.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

Victor was asked what could this DAEP do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. Victor feels that not much needs to change at the DAEP. He would like to see the quality of the education continue. Victor would like to see the home campus focus more on educating the student, so students can be just as successful, academically, as students that attend the DAEP.

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Isaac during the course of this study are described below. Victor was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of “What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?”

Victor’s first picture is his dog (Figure 56). He says dogs are loyal and independent, and he is hoping the DAEP can help guide him in that direction.



Figure 56. A dog. Loyalty and independent.

Victor’s second picture is a mop with torn up pieces of paper on the ground next to it (Figure 57). Each paper has a different word on it. The words are fighting, drugs, anger, and disrespect. Victor said there is “no mess too big to clean up.” He feels the DAEP is supposed to help students when they mess up, regardless of what the mistake was.



Figure 57. A mop. No mess is too big to clean up.

Victor's third picture is a half glass of water (Figure 58). Victor says it represents thinking. Students at the DAEP can choose to think the glass is half empty or they can choose to think the glass is half full. The DAEP provides supports for students to help them make the right choices.



Figure 58. Half a glass of water. Glass half full of thinking.

Victor's fourth picture is his video game console (Figure 59). He chose this picture because he now realizes that life is not a game. He is hoping to learn all he can from the DAEP and from his home campus (when he returns there) so he can be successful in school and in life. He does not want to go back to jail.

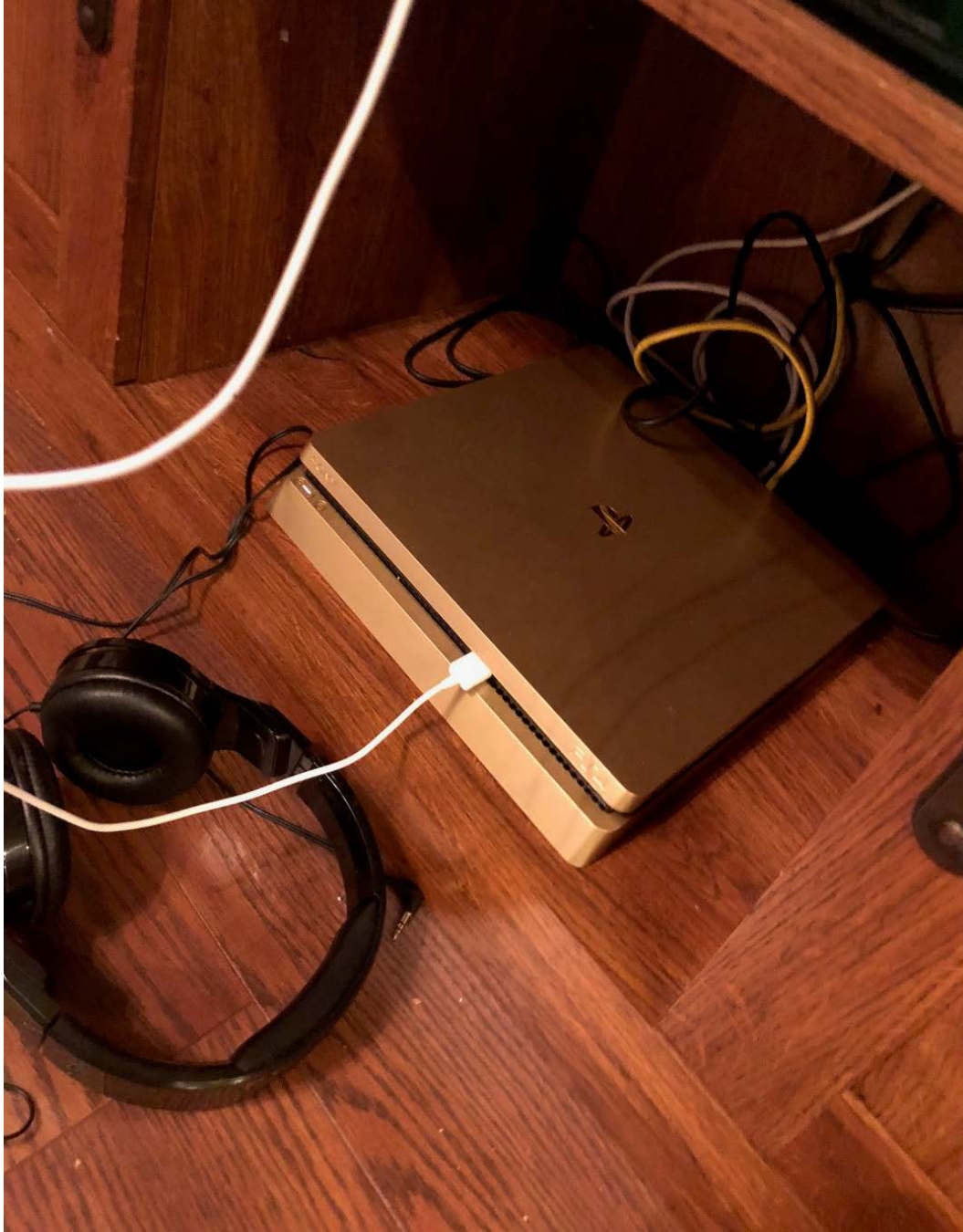


Figure 59. Video game. Life is not a game.

Victor's fifth picture are a set car keys (Figure 60). He referred to the keys as the keys to success. He feels the DAEP is equipping him with strategies that he can use both at school and at home. His goal is to get off probation, stay out of school, and to make his mother proud.



Figure 60. Keys. Keys to success.

Xavier

Background Information

Xavier is a 15-year-old 10th-grade male student with a total of two DAEP placements. Xavier feels people around him say he is generally an active person. He used to belong to a boxing gym, but was kicked out because he and his sister were messing around in the gym. He was taught growing up that boys should never hit girls. His sister kept on punching him repeatedly, so he decided to “drop” her. I asked what he meant by “drop” her. He said he hit her

leg and pushed her and that was it. The gym had a zero tolerance with that behavior and kicked him out.

Xavier says his parents are divorced, and he floats back and forth between them or he even stays with other family members or at a friend's house. He states all his family members work and they are rarely at home. Xavier has a sister and half-brother. Neither sibling has gone to a DAEP. His sister is working towards going into law enforcement and plans to arrest Xavier someday if he does not change his behavior.

Xavier said there are some aspects he likes about school, but friends are not one of them. He says you cannot trust your friends sometimes. He says he enjoys going to the library and playing on YouTube to learn about stuff that he is supposed to be learning in class. He feels he can be better prepared for class this way and that he enjoys teaching himself stuff. He stated, "I taught myself better. I noticed one week on YouTube, me watching videos, I got my grade up and I was like, man, you all suck." He said he is liking school more now that he has figured out ways to teach himself. Xavier states, "I like to learn better, just by me because sometimes growing up, I didn't have people who were around to teach me, so I found joy in teaching myself."

When asked what he does not like about school, Xavier, feels "some teachers focus more on themselves and how they're feeling but don't even think about how students may be feeling." He also feels teachers are not good at teaching and they teach to make themselves feel better.

Xavier has been to the DAEP two times. One time in ninth grade and the other time in 10th grade. Xavier said he does not remember if he got in trouble at home for being sent to the DAEP. He said he really does not live at any specific house anymore, so they were not really

able to give him consequences. Xavier told me the reason he is at the DAEP this time is it is his mom's fault "because she's the one that snitched on me, so I was like, okay."

Home Campus and the DAEP Experiences

Xavier was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at the DAEP. He said sometimes the teachers are hard-headed. He feels if students make mistakes and lose behavior points, they should also be allowed to gain behavior points if they prove themselves.

Xavier was asked if there were any particular experiences that made it difficult for him to be successful at his home campus. He feels "everyone's judgmental, 'cause they try to tell me I did so many things last year and this year. I'm like, just because you have heard my name before, it does not mean I am always doing something wrong."

Perceptions of Home Campus and DAEP Staff

Xavier was asked to describe his teachers, his counselors, and his administrators at his DAEP. He said "most of them are doing their job. Some of them take it personal. They should remember that these kids here actually have it rougher outside of the school. That's why I like school better now."

Xavier was then asked how much support he was receiving from his home campus student assistance counselors. The student assistance counselors work with students on social and emotional issues such as misbehavior, attendance concerns, at-risk behavior, drug and alcohol awareness, and suicide prevention to name a few. Xavier stated his home campus counselors did not help him before, during, or after his DAEP placement. He mentioned some of

the reason is because he had a lot of absences during his first placement at the DAEP. He also noted he liked the fact that the counselors did not reach out to him when he went back to his home campus; he did not like being noticed, because he is self-sufficient, and he is better at helping himself.

Xavier was then asked how much support he was receiving from his DAEP student counselor. There is only one counselor at this DAEP. She plays two different roles. She is responsible for the academic side of counseling, making sure that students are in the correct classes. She communicates with the home campus to create student schedules each time students enroll at DAEP. Students enroll at this DAEP two times per week. She is also responsible for working with students on a social and emotional level, much like the home campus student assistance counselors. Xavier said he never saw the DAEP counselor unless she happened to come into the office when he got into trouble.

The Purpose of DAEP

Xavier was asked if he thought DAEPs can help change student behavior while at a DAEP? He feels it may help some people. For him, he learns more outside of school. This time he decided to start his DAEP placement on a better note, not for anyone else, but for himself. He feels the change in people must be self-motivated.

Suggestions for a More Effective DAEP and Home Campus

I asked what this DAEP could do differently to help him, so he will not come back to it. He feels the DAEP should make people work out, like push-ups, when they get in trouble. Xavier said when he was in middle school his coaches made him do push-ups all the time. I

asked if it helped change his behavior. He said no, but it did help him get better at working out and made him physically stronger.

I asked what could his home campus do differently to help him, so he will not come back to the DAEP. Xavier stated, “I think over there, there should also do some group counseling like they do over here.”

Photovoice Project

Photovoice descriptions of photos that were taken by Xavier during the course of this study are described below. Xavier was asked to take five pictures based on the prompt of ‘What does a discipline alternative education program (DAEP) mean to you?’

Xavier’s first picture is of boxing gloves (Figure 61). Xavier said it makes him think of the DAEP. “Sometimes I feel like it beats you down, like when you’re feeling really good you can’t even smile.” He wishes he could smile more. He would like for staff to allow him to smile once in a while.



Figure 61. Boxing glove. The DAEP beats you down.

Xavier's second picture has knife and a knife sharpener on it (Figure 62). Xavier said this represents the DAEP because

the school, even though you're not happy, it makes you sharper, as in brighter at some point. Cause you're able to think clear, try to be better cause I see people, some of them, it seems like their job, but some of them do seem like they care. Some might.

Xavier was asked what kind of things at the DAEP help make him sharper or better.

Xavier states, "no communication with other students, I guess. Or with anybody. It's just you yourself. Some people are better at teaching themselves." He is able to focus more on his school work because of this.



Figure 62. Knife and knife sharpener. The DAEP can make you sharper and brighter.

Xavier's third picture is a big, rough, cement block (Figure 63). He says the block is like school, because school can be kind of rough sometimes. He said, "if you're not emotionally

prepared to be here, then you're going to feel like hitting everybody." Xavier then went on to say if he keeps hitting people that he would go to jail, and while he thinks the DAEP is cold, jail is even colder. He said the DAEP is supposed to help smooth out the rough edges of the block, the person.



Figure 63. Stone block. The DAEP is rough.

Xavier's fourth picture has a barbell in it (Figure 64). Xavier said it makes him think of the DAEP because,

sometimes DAEP just makes your day heavier. You come here to do the work, and you're like, I didn't even want to go to school in the first place and then it's kind of heavy to you. To me, I worked all summer in construction and somehow this was harder for me to be able to do.

He then clarified for me that it is not just the DAEP that is hard, it is any school. He said he would rather work all day long in the summer heat doing construction than go to school. His

reasons for that were because he would rather do physical labor and get paid to do it. He said, “cause when you work, at least you’re happy when you get that check.” To him, money makes all the difference.



Figure 64. Barbell. The DAEP can make your day heavy.

Xavier’s fifth picture has a taser in it (Figure 65). He said it reminded him of the DAEP because a taser is something that happens to someone when they are bad, and the DAEP is some where a person goes when they are bad. Students at this DAEP lose behavior points if they do something wrong. In addition, Xavier said this DAEP has

always got something coming at you. It’s either a verbal threat like you’re going to the office or you’re not going to make it in life or something like that. Then, if you don’t want people telling you stuff like that, just be better ‘cause you can’t ignore them ‘cause

that'll just make your day worse. If you ignore people, it just makes everything else worse. So just listen to what they got to say.



Figure 65. Taser. Getting in trouble at the DAEP feels like getting tased.

Counselor Focus Group Narratives

Twelve counselors (April, Darla, Donna, Frannie, Jackie, Jan, Jane, Paislee, Rachel, Shirley, Stella, and Susan) employed by Sunrise ISD were recruited as participants. In the

current study, the use of the focus groups included purposeful questioning to reveal themes from the viewpoint of secondary school counselors that provide emotional and behavioral support to students assigned to DAEPs. These themes were then used to reveal counselor perceptions of what DAEPs can do to be more effective in hopes of reducing the recidivism rate.

Initial Discussion of Student Photovoice Project Photos

All 62 of the students' photos (what DAEP means to the students) that were submitted for this study were displayed on the wall where the counselors' focus group interviews were being conducted. Pictures were arranged vertically in rows. The only information the counselors were provided were the pseudonyms of the students, which were labeled on each photo. Descriptions and meanings of each picture were not revealed to the counselors. The purpose of displaying the photos in an exhibit format without the students' meanings was to allow the counselors to see each photo and to get their initial impressions to what the students may have meant (through the eyes of the counselor) regarding the prompt for the students' photovoice project. The following narrative comes from the initial viewing of the students' photovoice project photos by the Sunrise ISD counselors that participated in this study.

I asked the counselors to reveal what their initial impressions were and what picture stands out most to them regarding the 62 pictures that were exhibited before them.

- Frannie: When I look at that I see a lot of movement, like transition, in those pictures. Like the railroad tracks, the road, the footprints, the kind of street intersection right there, where they just kind of almost like I have an opportunity to go from here to here. That this, I see DAEP as a vehicle of transition and change and movement. Maybe that's them being hopeful. And then like the barbells, whatever those gym things are called, are like strength. When I look at it,

I think they represent strength for the kid, and a fight like with the gloves. The fight to get to where I need to be. Like this is my way of being able to do that through DAEP. But that may be overly optimistic. The trash one makes me a little bit sad, like I've just been thrown away. Maybe not, but that's what it looks like to me. But that's what I see. The picture that stands out to me is the one with the trash can (see Figure 47) because I wonder if the students feel like they are thrown away like trash and left over there [the DAEP].

- Susan: If I had to pick one word of similarities that I could relate to my kids that are here at DAEP I would pick rules. I see lots of different rules in those [pictures]. I see in the tennis shoes and the sharpie, because that's always a big thing. The no talking. And then I went ahead and threw in the time, you've got to be here early, you've got to be at that stop sign before that bus, when it is there. So, I kinda lumped all that into rules. The picture that stands out to me is the cement block (see Figure 63) because it seems harsh.

- Paislee: I think if I had to look at this, the main thing that I see is paths. So, the kids know they have different paths or choices of paths, and DAEP is kind of a path they've chosen, and which path they go next is up to them. The picture that stands out to me is the drug addiction one (see Figure 50) because I know that we all know, as adults, we know that drug issues are a concern, but it's interesting to see that a child might point that out.

- Darla: When I look at all those, I see also getting on track and doing some rebuilding and tools maybe that they need to get on that path, whether it be rules or strength or whatever it is they need to work on to get there. The picture that stands out to me is the taser (see Figure 65) because it looks punitive.

- Stella: I think what I see, I see work, so just like the school work and the composition book and so work that way, but the weights can also be that you've got to work to build up your

strength. You've got just that, like it's work, or effort might be another word. The picture that stands out to me is the picture with the house being built (see Figure 17) because it looks like there is lots of potential there.

- Shirley: I see a lot of choices because a bunch of them had the drugs and the boxing gloves. I thought of fighting, not talking back to my mom, those kinds of things. And then with the roads and rules are choices or transition to something. I don't know what because there's not really kind of an end thing in any of those, besides the grade one. The one with the paper or maybe the picture with the check box. The picture that stands out to me is the picture with the taser as well (see Figure 65) just because it's harsh, and it's, you know, trouble and punishment, for control.

- Jackie: I find it interesting all the intersections and bus stops. At first, I thought about it literally because I know a lot of my kids will talk about how they have to get here so early and waiting for the bus. I thought, oh okay, I see, I get that with the bus. But then thinking of the intersections and seeing, well maybe that's them being hopeful that this path they are on but there are also other paths to be on. I feel like maybe the students are just processing their time here because you do see some like, ice cold, like the literal kind of things. They feel it's cold at DAEP or they got to get to the bus stop early in the morning. You see the clock at 7:07. But then you also see things like the grades, I see a C and then a 96 and you know, a lot of our students here do very well academically. It is almost like they are finding the beauty in their placement. Then you also see, I see a lot of what I'm assuming is consequences, as far as you see a picture of a phone, I'm wondering if they got their phone taken away. When you see the music and the Game Boys, to me I'm thinking, was that a privilege that was taken away because of their placement here at DAEP? The picture that stands out to me are the pictures with the

watermelon (see Figure 49) and cantaloupe (see Figure 6) because I'm wondering if it means these students are like cantaloupes and watermelons in a way that they both have exteriors, but we don't know what's on the inside. There's so much more than what you know, on the exterior.

- Jane (Director of Counseling): It's interesting to see the diversity because it seems like some may have had a very literal interpretation or maybe not even all their pictures were literal, but it seems like there's a lot of elements of literal. I see a book, seeing the walkie-talkies, seeing the composition notebook and the pencils. Some of that kind of stuff. And even some of the reasons that they're here, could also be, I'm literally here because I brought a weapon or. But also, just some very symbolic pictures. That seem to tell a story. It seems there's lots of pictures of intersections, roads, traffic signs. I think those pictures mean that this has to change, this is where this is a turning point. This is a road I'm on and maybe I don't like it. I'm at that turning point. I was not sure what to think about the boxing gloves or weights. Maybe it meant that they were over here for fighting. I don't know. The weights are heavy meaning? Maybe being at DAEP is a heavy thing to go through or a big deal. I also think it seems like a transition theme, that it, I don't know. Maybe transitions to, not the right word but like, all the pictures don't seem hopeful for each student. But each of them, I could justify, in looking at them, that there's a sense of hopefulness in each of them. Maybe it's that, thinking about that transition from where I've been, to where I want to be. The picture that stands out to me are the picture with the traffic signs (see Figures 11, 24, 31, 45) because maybe it is time to change and this is their turning point. This is a road I'm on and maybe the students do not like it.

- April: I feel there's more commonalities up there than maybe what we really know across each one. I think I'm maybe noticing some consequences they [students] got, as a result of their behavior and their placement at DAEP. Like maybe the loss of a car, video games and

loss of maybe a cellphone and privileges. I also noticed several of the pictures outside looks like it's dark when they took the picture. I don't know if that was just a coincidence or if that meant something and that was intentional or not. I don't know if it meant there was a dark path or not. Maybe the things they don't like here because I know they have to get up early and it's cold here and it's dark when they're getting on that bus in the morning. Maybe the food's not so good, I don't know. The picture that stands out to me are the pictures that are taken when it is dark out (see Figures 26, 27, 32) because I want to know if that darkness symbolizes anything.

- Jan: I see quite a bit of symbolism. Interestingly, there's some themes in the symbolism. I see this in several of the pictures. I see the under-construction theme. Like the unfinished house and the half full glass. And the sweeping up, you know, like the cleaning up the mess kind of thing. I see what could be a literal meaning as well. I see a lot of cold things and I know that my kids talk often about it being freezing here. I'm wondering if that's a theme. I see a lot of pictures of their bus stops, like where they go to come here. And buses as well. A lot of, what I'm assuming are part of the reason that they're here, either there's some type of weapon or drug or fight, like gloves for fighting, as symbolism. Or sweeping up the reasons why they're here. Regarding the boxing gloves, I have so many kids who do box and that is their coping skill. I'm wondering if that is how they take out their frustration or if this is how they are dealing with their feelings about being at DAEP or is it some other type of coping. I also wonder about transitions and change and the road that there is a lot of traveling. There's a lot of juvenile arrests, the Taser, the picture of JJ. Is this in my future, kind of themes as well. I'm wondering if that played into it at all. Yeah, I do see a lot of symbolism there. The picture that stands out to me is the picture with the mop sweeping up the paper (see Figure 57) because I hope that his plans to sweep up his mistakes and not make that mess again.

Both Donna and Rachel were not present during the Photovoice project photo exhibit.

Secondary Discussion of Student Photovoice Project Photos

Each counselor was informed that I conducted a photo analysis session with each student to ensure an accurate meaning of each of their photos and how each of their photos represented what the DAEP meant to them. All 62 pictures remained displayed on the wall during the entirety of the counselor focus group. The counselors anxiously waited for the student's descriptions and meanings of each picture to be revealed to them. The purpose of revealing the meaning of each photo to the counselors was done in hopes that they could identify themes and provide feedback regarding possible suggestions that might improve the overall effectiveness of this DAEP in hopes of reducing the recidivism rate. The following narratives resulted from the discussion with the Sunrise ISD counselors that participated in this study after the meanings of the students' photovoice project photos were revealed to them.

The counselors were asked what their initial thoughts were now knowing how each photo represents the DAEP, according to the student that took the photos. Paislee said, "I think that it seems the kids are more inquisitive than you would initially think that they are. They think a lot deeper than what they're trying to portray to their peers." Stella felt the pictures were more positive and hopeful than she originally thought.

Some of the things that we thought might be negative, like the trash cans and stuff actually had a kind of a more positive spin on them. Even the one with all the buses, like you said when you questioned him about it how none of his photos mentioned classes and stuff. He said that was because the classes were good. He didn't have issue there, so he was just pointing out the issues he did have. It seems as though some students used this opportunity to list their concerns or issues [about the DAEP] such as the temperature, the bus ride, and being able to read or talk in the cafeteria. It was just interesting how many students used this project as a platform. So, it was more hopeful than I thought.

Darla agreed with both Paislee and Stella by noting that some of the pictures that she thought were going to be a negative ended up being “aha” moments to her.

Darla: Not all the photos that appeared negative were actually negative. For example, the cold didn’t mean what I thought it would mean. I thought it would mean they feel like DAEP is a cold, non-loving place, and it was just really about temperature.

Susan was not surprised by what was revealed to the group, regarding what the students feel the DAEP means to them. She said, “it doesn’t surprise me a whole lot, from talking to just my kids, but the amount of positivity that they see in this place is really interesting to me.”

Susan went on to say that it would be interesting to have the same students do the same assignment [photovoice project] at their home campus to see how much different the pictures would be in comparing the home campus photos to the DAEP photos. Shirley also went on to note positivity at the DAEP. She stated, “you can definitely see the positivity, you know, and being able to see a way to change, or follow the right path, there was kind of a theme of that too.

Stella thought Sasha’s [student] meanings of what DAEP meant to her were fascinating, especially when Sasha noted how well the “bad” kids act while at the DAEP.

Stella: She’s at the same school with these other people, but it seemed very much like, somehow, she’s just happened to be here [DAEP]. And there’s these bad kids, which that’s not her, or course. She has the desire for drug counseling, and the recycle your life, and we need to grow. Like there was some depth there.

Sasha (student) was asked during her interview if she considered herself a “bad” kid because she attended the DAEP too. She said no. The counselors felt it was interesting to see how the students viewed other students that attend the DAEP compared to themselves (who also attend the DAEP). Sasha was a model child at the DAEP. She got in, she did her time, and she got out early, with no problems. She did everything she was supposed to do.

Shirley felt another overriding commonality among the photos was that of safety. She said students know what is expected of them while they are at the DAEP. She continued to say

the students know why they are at DAEP, but at the same time, there seemed to be a hierarchy of needs. Shirley stated the students seem to believe the DAEP provided a “basic comfort and a sense of being safe and being taken care of.” Jane (Director of Counseling) could not agree more. She said, “there’s a lot of talk about safety. This DAEP staff must be doing an excellent job talking about safety during orientation.”

Jackie went on to note it seemed like many of the students do not necessarily like all the rules of the school, but also see the purpose behind them.

Jackie: It seemed like a lot of those photos represents rules that keep everybody safe. Or so, it’s nice that some of the students can at least see the purpose behind it and it’s not, we’re just doing it just because. Students were able to explain exactly why the rules are put into place. I think a lot of our kids need to know the purpose behind things that we do. And they don’t feel like, it’s just another person telling them what to do.

Another theme that came out during the counselor focus group was the need for relationships among staff and students. Jan feels the students are crying out for positive student-teacher relationships. Jan states, “I think that the pictures are saying, ‘I want some actual relationships here at DAEP and at the home campus.’” Jane (Director of Counseling) also mentioned students, in general, need structure and relationships. She states, “because a lot of them [students] miss the social part, but it sounds like they still are appreciative of this structure. They [students] definitely crave both the structure and the relationship it seems.”

During the focus group interview, the counselors also started to note some concerns that were revealed during discussion of the meanings of each photo taken by the students. There seems to be a lack of success for some students. Shirley was concerned because if the students can see a way to change by following the right path, then why have the students not used what they have learned at the DAEP and transferred their good behavior over to their home campus

when they get back there (so the students will not get into trouble again and return back to the DAEP). Shirley went on to answer her own question.

When students leave here [DAEP], they're not in the right environment at the home campus. Here [DAEP] it's set up where their needs are met, and they can be successful, and then when they leave, it's not the same. It is as if they have figured out DAEP, but not sure how to transfer what they have learned at it to their home campus or they do not have the right supports or environment to be successful at their home campus.

Shirley, feels some of the reasons students may not be successful at their home campus is because there are too many variables at the home campus. Darla noted one of the students, Samantha, only seemed to focus on dress code. Samantha's pictures were not deep and she had the most number of placements. It appears, for Samantha, the dress code was her most stressful thing to worry about. Many of the counselors wondered if Samantha even cared about why she was at the DAEP and what she needs to do to make some positive changes? Jane (Director of Counseling) noted a lot of the students talk about how the DAEP is very strict and that alone should make students not want to come back, but the students are still coming back.

Jackie noted the students are aware of what they need to be doing. She mentioned the "check mark" picture as example. Students know to check themselves. However, Jackie went on to note how surprised she is that these students still ended up coming back to the DAEP. She states, "I don't know, it's tough because it seems like they appear to be self-motivated in the sense that they know what is needed from themselves, yet they still come back to DAEP."

Jan was extremely surprised by Samantha's [student] photos.

There was no sign of hope in her pictures at all. It was all very standard procedure. It's cold there, I have to think, and this is what I have to wear, and they are always watching me with walkie-talkies. Maybe these will be all the reasons she will never come back. Her answers are very literal to the question of "what does DAEP mean to you?" She just gave factual answers.

During the focus group interview, the counselors were asked a clarifying question on why they might think students would want to either stay or come back to the DAEP. I wanted to know if it was the support the DAEP is giving the students to make better choices, so they will not get in trouble again at their home campus or is it simply the process and procedures the DAEP has. Jan went on to say that she is concerned because she feels students just want to come back to the DAEP. She says her students tell her all the time they like the DAEP because of the structure, the ability to focus, the relationships with the teachers, and the lack of student drama. Jane (Director of Counseling) said it “sounds like a lot of the students want to come back to DAEP because the process and procedures allow the students to stay focused on their academics and their grades go up.”

Philosophy of Counseling

During the counselor focus group interview, the counselors were asked to share their philosophy of counselling and how they incorporated it when supporting students at the DAEP. Frannie said she “pulls from all different kinds of theories in order to be effective in working with kids, especially kids that come here [DAEP].” She went on to mention that one philosophy does not fit all students.

Frannie: One shoe fits all does not work. In particular in working with this population, we all have to be really skilled in all different kinds of interventions and approaches and schools of thought. What works with some kids does not work with others. I don’t even think you could say that there’s one philosophy that we could apply to every kid, especially in this [DAEP] setting.

Stella agreed with Frannie and notes she differentiates between theoretical orientation and philosophy and uses a range of styles and techniques to support her students and families. She went on to say that her main purpose is to provide support and encourage students in

whatever manner necessary regardless of what their presenting problem is. Stella attacks all problems with a holistic approach. Jane (Director of Counseling) states, “you can’t teach Bloom’s taxonomy until you address Maslow’s hierarchy.” Jane went on to say counselors are a support by helping students learn to understand their emotional needs and just build on their own emotional intelligence. Jane states, “if students are depressed or if they’ve got stuff going on at home, they’re not going to be able to learn. Stella could not agree more.

We’re educating kids, but you can’t teach a child that has severe depression or if their home life is falling apart. Going back to Maslow’s hierarchy, if students don’t know where dinner is coming from and if they are not getting those basic needs, we [counselors] must step in and help bridge that gap. We must all just work together. We just get to play one piece of that.

Susan added that so much of the counseling is all about the relationship counselors have with the students. She says relation building is the key to trust and success. She then added, once the relationship is built, then, and only then, can counselors piece things together to figure out what is going to work in a particular situation for a particular student. Jane (Director of Counseling) added to Susan’s comment about relationship building. She said she is very intentional when it comes to hiring practices in her district.

Jane (Director of Counseling): I’m looking for someone who can build relationships, who knows that their role is to remove barriers to success. It’s to help to guide the kid or the student, the family, the system, in removing those barriers to success. Then, it’s having the belief that all kids can improve. All kids can change. All kids are good. All kids are capable of moving forward.

Jackie agreed that relationship building is instrumental in removing barriers, so all students can be successful. She added that first and foremost she acts as a social worker. Jackie states that counselors must believe that students can be successful.

Jackie: Our kids recognize that. They know when you think, “Oh, you think I’m going to mess up anyways or I’m going to do this again. You think I’m a bad kid. I have this label.” For us [counselors], we must present to the student that we don’t see them with that label. We know you made this decision or this choice, but you’re separate from that.

Our students pick up on that and they pick up on when their teachers or people in the building don't feel like they can be successful and they're waiting for them [students] to mess up.

Rachel added to Jackie's comments regarding the importance of building relationships by saying that students want adults to understand and believe they can succeed, but they also need adults to have that type of positive relationship with them.

Rachel: At home, especially a lot of my DAEP students, they don't have the best family life. They need those core people at their home campuses or wherever they're at and they need those people to listen to them and relay to them that they are cared for.

Counselor Roles at a DAEP

During the counselor focus group interview, the counselors were asked to share their belief of what the counselor roles are in terms of supporting students while they are at the home campuses as well as while they are enrolled in the DAEP. Jane (Director of Counselor) began by saying that the role of a student assistance counselor is advocating for students, especially those with behavior problems. She also mentioned the role of the counselor is to help students and teachers recognize that students can be successful. In addition, the counselor should meet with students on an individual and group basis. Jackie states the DAEP students are needing a consistent check in or supportive style of services more than students that do not get into trouble. Jane (Director of Counselor) feels a lot of the students do not have "coping skills that they need to learn or how to know when they are angry." April agreed and said counselors really do need to support students in a more holistic fashion. She states, "I would say, our role as a counselor is to provide extra support for students who may be struggling socially and emotionally because it's affecting their academic success."

Darla mention the most important thing a counselor does is build rapport with that child.

Darla: If they don't trust me, I'm not getting anywhere with them. I'm not going to get any information. Then, especially kids from DAEP, you do have to genuinely believe in them or they'll feel that you're just saying what everyone says. "Oh, you can do it, buddy." Without that trust, you're not going to get anywhere with them. I've noticed that when they do come to DAEP and they come back they're like, "Oh, I'm so sorry I disappointed you." You're just reassuring them that they're not a disappointment. Those things are very important.

Donna went on to say that the counselor's role also needs to be consistent. Consistency with meeting with the student will help foster a positive working relationship. She states, "if we have that relationship with the students and we see them more often, they will also see how much we care about them." However, many of the counselors mentioned that while it is easier to visit with their DAEP students more consistently (because they visit them once a week and they are all in the same place), they struggle to keep that consistency when they return to the home campus for various reasons.

Darla said another role of a counselor is to reach out to the students. She states, "a lot of students don't like asking for help. We need to let them know that asking for help does not mean you're weak. It actually takes more strength to ask for help." Susan agreed and added the students need to know adults are willing to reach out to them to see if they are doing well, because it lets students know that adults really do care. Susan then went on to say it is as simple as saying "Are you okay? How are you doing?" However, Susan says she struggles with maintaining the relationship she has built with the DAEP students when they return to their home campus.

Susan: The problem occurs when the students get back to the home campus because their relationship with the peers (that are not good for them) is way stronger than the relationship with me. I can, to a certain extent, say, "think it through and let's talk about it," but those peers are just overriding.

Purpose of DAEP

During the counselor focus group interview, the counselors were asked to share their belief of what the purpose of the DAEP is and to provide their views on how the Sunrise DAEP is measuring up to that purpose. The group mutually agreed one of the purposes of the DAEP is supposed to be a deterrent to misbehavior and for students to not repeat those behavior that got them sent to the DAEP in the first place. Stella feels that another purpose of DAEP is to provide structure in the students' lives. Not just at DAEP, but also an opportunity where students can learn how to use structure and transfer what they learned at their home campus and at home. She said, "anybody that's worked with kids know kids do well with structure. A lot of them don't get it at home and some need more. Some can handle more freedom than others." Rachel feels a lot of the students like going to the DAEP because of the structure and that is why some of them return.

Rachel: A lot of those students really liked coming back. They liked it because of the same thing here. The structure, it helps with the kids having a structure, knowing exactly what's going to happen, no surprises. It's one-on-one. Their grades improve because they have more attention. They have less distractions. I do feel like a lot of students need this type of environment and this is where they thrive. They like being successful. If that means that they have to commit the same offense again in order to come here, sometimes they'll do it because this is the best home that they have had.

The counselors agreed that along with the structure and procedures comes rules. They feel that another purpose of the DAEP is to teach students how to follow and respect rules consistently and to realize consequences occur, no matter how big or small when students break the rules. Stella mentioned that behavior management becomes more effective when students know what the rules are at the DAEP and the rules and consequences are going to be enforced the same way by everybody on the DAEP campus. Stella said, "you know what the consequence is, and you know very much if you play by those rules, you will do well, and you will earn

privileges. If you don't play by the rules, then there are consequences for that." She went on to say students tend to struggle more on the home campus with rules due to less structure and because the rules are not consistent due to the high number of students and teachers.

During the counselor focus group, the counselors agreed that a purpose of the DAEP is to teach resiliency skills and coping skills, to learn how to face the adversities that they are going to face in life. Darla said the majority of these kids are not learning these skills at home. If students are not learning these skills, the school system will have to step in to provide supports. Darla feels the DAEP needs to provide structures and rules, and while she understands the DAEP is a consequence, there needs to be more to the purpose of a DAEP, such as providing skills to allow students to be successful on a long-term basis.

Darla: I think we have a responsibility to these children. If we're going to look at what's in the best interest of the children, then I don't think it should just be punitive. Like Frannie was saying, I think if we are doing what's in the best interest of the student, then it's got to be both. You can still have structure, but it can also have a therapeutic component as well. Success at a DAEP is when a student returns to their home campus and never returns back to the DAEP. This would mean that the student's behavior changed for the better.

The counselors were asked what they thought the home campus staff would feel is the purpose of the DAEP. Frannie feels some of the teachers would say the purpose of the DAEP is to simply remove the students from the campus.

Frannie: "Oh, get rid of them. Send them right over there. We cannot deal with that kid. He needs to go to DAEP." It's just like, "He doesn't belong in our classroom." It's a dumping ground. When they're so frustrated, it's a dumping ground. In the moment, and I think what's sad about it is, that kid knows they're not wanted. They may be hearing that at home and now they go to school and they know they are not wanted in the classroom.

Jane (Director of Counseling) feels most times students are told they will have a clean slate when they come back to the same teachers at the home campus. But, she told the focus group, that is not always the case.

Jane: Sometimes the teacher is dreading the day that they come back and there is no opportunity to restore that relationship. There's not a whole lot of time for transition for them to come back where you can work with the whole team and work with the student. They just go back like it was before.

Donna feels the administration does a really good job at times being selective and following district guidelines of when to send a student to the DAEP. She states, "They [administration] don't just send kids that don't need to be sent."

Environmental Concerns

During the counselor focus group interviews, it was discovered that the counselors had concerns that evolved from the student's lives at home. Students are bringing their struggles at home to school with them or they are not getting the social and emotional needs and/or the basic needs they need to be successful at home or at school. Frannie feels a lot of times when DAEP has repeat offenders, it is because those repeat offenders are learning bad behaviors outside of the educational setting.

Frannie: The factors that contribute to that kind of recidivism, it's not something we're going to be addressing here [DAEP]. There's so many outside factors for that. It's way more environmental and familial. We may make an impact, but it's a tiny dent. When you have frequent fliers like that, that's a lifestyle issue.

Some of the counselors have experienced situations where the parents may be teaching or enabling bad behavior. One example presented during the counselor focus groups that one of her students was at the DAEP for doing drugs. It was later discovered that the parent was giving the student drugs to sell as a way to provide income for the family. In addition, it was said sometimes parents teach their children things that result in bad behavior, but the student did not know it was wrong and not normal behavior.

Students are even hearing conflicting things at home. Shirley says that she has some students tell that their parents will say things such as “why are you talking to a counselor? Are you crazy? What do you need to talk to them for?” Paislee said the bad behavior becomes normal behavior because it goes back to the social learning part of things.

Paislee: Students have told me, “Hey, I’m going to watch this happening and I’m going to do it myself.” I’ve had parents tell their kids, “this is what our family does. We all go to jail. I mean so you’re going to do your time and there’s no way out of it.”

The counselors believe it very difficult to control those outside factors. They get frustrated. As Frannie states, they can work with the students eight hours a day at school, “then the students go home to chaos and it just blows everything out of the water that we’ve done all day because of their home life.” Shirley stated her frustration as well:

I’m working on ways now that I can get the students to find the motivation to let them realize they can bring themselves out of that situation if they want to. They can identify with people that have maybe come from their background and made it out to where they go, “Oh, okay, so I don’t have to stay in trouble and do this because this is what my family did.”

The counselors agreed the students are battling their natural developmental stage and there’s too many relationships. Students need to be able to trust all the adults in the lives.

Many of the counselors feel there is a need to provide counseling to the parents. It was clearly stated it is not because the parents are not necessarily doing anything wrong, but they may not know how to support their child in time of need. Frannie mentioned “it’d be great if we could do a parent component, just one night a week or something.” One of the struggles with supporting the families is getting the parents to come to counseling. Darla mentioned that it did not even matter whether the counseling was free or not. She said, “In many cases, both parents have two to three jobs each.” It was suggested by other counselors in the focus group that maybe the school district should bring the counseling to the families instead of having the families come

to the school. It was also mentioned that maybe DAEP could offer incentives to students, such as getting the length of placement reduced, if families would agree to counseling. Susan asked if there was a way to make the family counseling services mandatory.

Susan: My population and my home campus parents that I try to work with, they won't come. It doesn't matter and that's really sad for me to say, but it wouldn't matter if it was an incentive for their kid to get less days. They're not going to come because that takes from their time or it's something where they have one car and one parent works during the day and one works at night and there seems to be no way to get them to come.

Strengths of their DAEP

During the counselor focus group interviews, the counselors were asked to reveal what they felt were strengths regarding the Sunrise ISD DAEP. The counselors feel the DAEP staff is really good at communicating. Each week when they come to visit their students, the staff will tell them exactly what's going on with their students that week. They would have a conversation about behavior, academics, and even stressors the students would be experiencing. In addition, the consensus of the group is that consistency in the DAEP is evident. The kids know what to expect here and what all the rules are whether they like them or not. The overall culture among the staff is positive.

Jackie: I think the staff is really positive. Even when kids have a bad day or they get sent home, I don't think they ever take it personal. Staff will tell the students, "it was a choice. It was a behavior, come on back tomorrow and we'll start again."

In addition, the counselors feel the staff at the DAEP really seem to care about the students. Susan reported one thing the teachers here at DAEP is the teachers brag on the students in front of the home campus counselor. Susan says, "I see my kids just light up. You just see this look on their face." In addition, some teachers can still be playful with the students and that's something that they do need. Teachers can't be serious all the time.

However, the positive relationships among staff and students at the Sunrise DAEP has caused some concerns. A lot of the students do not get the same positive interaction at their home campus, resulting in students wanting to stay at or come back to the DAEP. One student [name unknown] told her counselor, “You know what? I’ll start riding it out here. I’ll come here next year too.”

Susan: I hear some of my students say they like the structure at DAEP. To add to it, they love the teachers and they feel like the teachers here [DAEP] care about them so much more than on their home campus where there’s 25 in a class. A lot of mine as soon as they get back they’re like, ‘I want to go back to DAEP. I’m going to hit somebody, so I can go back’ or whatever it takes. I mean I’m hearing the same things you [other counselors] are. They like it.

Some of the counselors feel there may be a false representation of the recidivism rate since some of the students prefer to spend time at the DAEP. There was a suggestion that possibly the DAEP could survey students as they near the end of their placement on whether the students prefer the DAEP setting or the home campus setting more.

The counselors feel another strength at the Sunrise DAEP is the students are able to bring up their grades and have a sense of feeling successful at something. The sense of success is really empowering to the students. The counselors are hopeful this success will increase their confidence and will transfer to the home campus.

The counselors feel another strength at the Sunrise DAEP is the point system or behavior chart. The students are able to work towards a goal of having privileges tied to different levels, which can be a positive for a lot of the students.

Donna: I’ve seen kids that are in trouble every single day at the home campus get on the highest level here [DAEP] within the first couple weeks. I think I’ve received three letters from kids here saying, “The next time you see me, I’m going to be on silver.” They are just beaming with pride because they’ve been successful and that’s always really awesome to see.

Lastly, the counselors mentioned that a positive aspect of the Sunrise DAEP is the safety factor. The students seem to tell the counselors all the times that they feel safer here than they do on their home campus. Safe from themselves and from others. The students say there is no student drama for them to worry about.

Weaknesses of their DAEP

During the counselor focus group interviews, the counselors were asked to reveal what they felt were weaknesses regarding the Sunrise ISD DAEP. Counselors noted there were not enough targeted interventions for student misbehavior. For example, there needs to be drug and alcohol awareness counseling for students involved in either drugs or alcohol. There needs to be anger management support for those with anger issues. There needs to be targeted support for students who are getting in trouble for online social media reasons, etc. The counselors are hopeful that a targeted intervention for students will result in them getting the support they need, resulting in less reoccurrences of the same misbehavior.

In addition, the counselors would like to see more opportunities for group counseling that would target restorative practices. This would be an opportunity for the student to realize what they did wrong and make amends with those affected (with either home campus staff or students or DAEP staff or students) in hopes of reducing future occurrences.

The counselors feel it is difficult to perform all the tasks that need to be done effectively with the DAEP students. Many of the counselors feel the lack of time, staff, and resources provided districtwide is of concern. Darla feels there is not enough support staff. She stated, “I mean obviously one person can’t do it all.”

Paislee: It’s the scheduling time on the home campus and the DAEP campus, plus meeting with individual kids, plus drug counseling, plus behavioral type counseling, plus

state testing, plus whatever. With all of the different things that are going on, it's hard for one particular individual. That's where I'm trying to figure out balance. Plus, the kiddos need to be in the classroom. Just being pulled in several different directions is something that I am trying to figure out.

Another weakness revealed during the counselor focus groups was the lack of community buy-in.

April: The community buy-in of the school, I just don't feel like it's there. I feel like if we are going to go from punitive to reparative/restorative, then there has to be a community buy-in where people are maybe volunteering their services. People are understanding that there's a need for these things on this campus. If we can get the community buy-in, you wouldn't be alone because if the district is not going to provide funding for another support staff, you're right. You can't get it all. Community buy-in I think would be good to get the support staff that we need on this campus.

The length of student placements to DAEP was vastly discussed among the counseling group during the focus group interviews. The counselors noted there does not seem to be consistency through the district. They went on to speak how some campuses might place a student to the DAEP for 30 days for an offense while another campus would place a student for 90 days for the same offense. The counselors pleaded that consistency needs to be the key. They also mentioned students and families talk and they even notice the discrepancy in length of placement. Jane (Director of Counseling) informed the counselors the Sunrise ISD is in the process of creating a matrix that will assist in aligning all the schools in the district to be more consistent. The counselors were asked what they felt would be an appropriate amount of time for a student to be placed at the DAEP to serve out a consequence, but also to allow enough time to provide a restorative setting that would support students from making poor choices in the future. Frannie states, "I would say that if it's going to be restorative and more intensive help and more intensive counseling services for these kids, anywhere from six to eight weeks is usually it. All of the counselors agreed, and Darla went on to say:

If we're going to restorative practices, I think a minimum should be at least 30 days and a maximum should be no more than 60 days. I have a few students in here [DAEP] for 90 days and I've seen them drastically go downhill. After a certain point they've just given up.

Lastly, one of the most spoken about concerns during the focus group was the lack of providing a restorative practice setting for the students. The counselors agreed the DAEP is a consequence for poor behavior, however, they also feel it needs to be more than just a consequence.

Frannie: If you say it's a discipline placement, yes, I think you hit the mark on the discipline. The rehabilitative component of the program is not there. It's not here because this campus is not designed to be that way. It's highly structured. It's not that it can't be more therapeutic, but it's not designed to be therapeutic. It never has been really. Maybe what has to be looked at are what is the purpose of this? Is it punitive? Is it disciplinarian, like discipline only? Is it supposed to be rehabilitative? Is it two pronged? Your frequent fliers are the ones that are not being rehabilitated and you have two separate sets of kids. You've got mistakers and you have the delinquent. Those you handle two different ways and the delinquents are out here as well getting in trouble. That's a different kind of intervention and a different kind of kid.

Jane (Director of Counseling): Before I was here, I came from a school in Illinois and I worked there for almost ten years. They had a really strong PBIS background and a lot of restorative discipline, a lot of positive behavior supports. When I moved to Texas and I got this job this was part of the job. I couldn't understand what the DAEP was for because it was so contradictory to everything that we had been doing. It was like they send kids to a school for discipline to do what? Nobody really could answer that for me. I started working with some of the kids here and there really isn't that restorative rehabilitative piece to help with those social emotional things. A lot of the kids that are here that I've worked with either have a drug addiction or they have severe behavioral problems like assaults and anger management problems and just so many things that need to be addressed. They're here [DAEP] and they're working and they're getting schoolwork done and that's great, but when they come back to the campus there's nothing. It's the same that you guys said, but it was just a real interesting perspective for me. It was like what is this DAEP placement and why do we have that? What is the purpose of it? It's interesting.

The counselors went on to discuss that while the length of placement for the students was important to allow time to receive the support the students needed, it was also important that the DAEP allowed enough time for the counselors to provide the support.

Frannie: It used to be a little bit longer you could be here. You [counselors] could be here for an hour and do a full-on group for an hour or so. Just over the years it just got smaller and smaller. They just had too much trying to cram in a day. We were taking too much time doing that. I think that shifted just because there was so much more academically. Originally, counselors could sit for an hour, hour and a half and do a group with kids. It just gradually came to 20 minutes or so, 30 minutes or so. Our role changed and just got smaller in that way.

Counselor Recommendations

During the focus group interviews, the counselors were asked what changes do they feel need to be implemented at DAEP and/or at their home campus so students can be behaviorally successful. They were asked to consider recommendations based on their views of the student photovoice project, the counseling groups they have conducted with DAEP students, their interactions with staff and students at their home campus and at DAEP, and from what they have gleaned from the counselor focus group interviews.

The counselors, collectively, feel there needs to be some changes at the home campus first. There seems to be a lack of structure, a lack of positive behavioral supports, a lack of teacher- student relationships, and a lack of transitional support (to and from the DAEP), at least for the students that tend to have repeat placements at the DAEP.

Darla: A lot of the students that I meet with that have been to DAEP numerous times. They like the structure of DAEP and they feel like they can be successful here. And they know, or feel like, they can't be successful at their home campus. They feel like they just can't be who they need to be, to be successful at their home campus. The students want to be on their home campus, but it's like once they do get back, and they notice, "Oh god, this is hard. I keep getting in trouble. Forget it. Just send me back to DAEP."

Susan: The students like the attention they get from the teachers here [DAEP]. It means a lot to those kids. Because they feel like they don't get that at their home campus. It becomes very hard to balance what is done at this DAEP. DAEP administration cannot afford to make this place not a loving, secure, caring place, so they don't wanna be here. Because they need that. So, I feel like, my opinion, the problem is more with the home campus, than here [DAEP]. You know, how do we get the home campus teachers to see that being more caring and having more structure on the campus is needed? Even

though, at the beginning, you're gonna get some push back and it's gonna be hard in the first couple weeks, but the kids really do want that structure. Students do well at DAEP because of the *hard* teachers, because of all the structure and rules and the teachers don't put up with so much stuff. They [students] do fine because they know all they need is consistency, rules, and a caring teacher.

Jan went on to say she has a group of boys she meets with consistently every week.

These boys tell her they feel like they have giant targets on their backs and they are expected to fail when they go back to the home campus.

Jan: Every week we talk about the obstacles that they face and the choices. They're all on the verge of giving up, again. Just because they feel like the system is broken and against them. Honestly, I feel it for them too. This happens at the home campus and outside in the communities that they live and operate in on a daily basis. This is not just a DAEP issue. If we're going to work on building relationships at the DAEP, we need to work on building relationships with the home campus. There needs to be more of a bridge and it needs to go beyond just those of us in this room.

Rachel identified a need for the home administration and teachers to visit their students at the DAEP from time to time. She said it is not enough that the only person visiting them is a student assistance counselor, that they may or may not have even known before they came to the DAEP.

Rachel: How neat would it be if a teacher or somebody from the home campus would come and visit for five minutes and just say, "I can't wait for you to come back to school," I think the transition piece has to start here. It can't be you figured out how to be successful at DEAP. Once you figure it out, you get to leave now, but you still don't know how to be successful at your home campus. That transition piece needs to begin here before they even get back to home campus. I think that would be a cool idea. I know, it's another thing to add on someone else's plate. It doesn't take long to just talk to a student for five or 10 minutes and just say how excited you are for them to come back to your campus, especially if it's that teacher that maybe the offense was done in their classroom or whatever to rebuild that rapport. To build that relationship up again so that student doesn't come back to home campus with that anxiety and fear of dreading going back to that class.

The counselors also feel there needs to be some changes both at the home campus and at the DAEP. There needs to be counseling resources and targeted interventions available that can

be used before students are placed and even more so if a student is placed at the DAEP. Darla went on to give a few examples:

Darla: I feel that what is needed is more counseling that targets specific misbehavior. Most of your high school placements are from drugs and alcohol, fighting, anger management, or disrespect. However, I feel specific interventions need to happen at the home campus before students are even sent to DAEP. And then even more if they [students] are sent to DAEP for those specific reasons they are sent.

Stella agreed with Darla, but added many of the students need support dealing with stress and anxiety first. She mentioned that in her experiences, a lot of the students that do not know how to handle stress and anxiety tend to get in other trouble later, such as drugs, fighting, and anger management. Stella said, “students just do not know how to cope and deal with all the stuff that they go through.”

Jane (Director of Counseling) added part of the reason students come back to a DAEP is because the school system never identified the root cause of the problem. She said, “if a kid is using drugs and alcohol, chances are there’s some underlying mental health disorder or trauma.” In addition, Donna agreed there needs to more of a systematic and organized approach. She said there are a lot of talented counselors in the Sunrise ISD that can do a lot of good for these kids.

Donna: Maybe it’s setting something up where there’s some direct teaching of resiliency and coping skills. Yes, we’re busy with the academic side. However, if there’s not an intervention, that cognitive piece isn’t going to develop. We can try and teach them math all we want, but until we deal with those other things it’s never going to go beyond that moment.

Frannie feels the number one thing that the DAEP students all have in common is an inability to regulate and manage their emotions and behavior.

Frannie: I think, it is what separates them [students] from the mainstream population. Because they can’t do that, they blow out in all different kinds of ways at school. So obviously they’re here because they broke the rules, but it’s because they can’t manage. So, it ends up, ultimately, being a counseling issue. It really is about how do I identify what I’m feeling and express it in ways that are appropriate. How can I resolve this conflict without getting into a fight? I mean it’s all counseling based. We just don’t have

the resources on a home campus to meet all of those needs with just the limited resources and the people that we have to do that. But if you ever did that, on a home campus and focused on that. You would have far fewer people here at the DAEP. All these kids, they want to learn how to regulate their behavior. We expect them to manage it.

A major concern identified by the counselors was a lack of transitional supports at the home campus after a student completes a DAEP placement. Rachel and Frannie feel there is a problem with the transition piece.

Rachel: We are missing the compliance to self-reliance part for some of these students. So, at DAEP, it's compliance. Like you do what you gotta do, but there's no piece to help them set goals and to understand that and sustain that when they go back to their home campus. Students need to think "this is where I was, and this is where I wanna be and I have to make a goal to get there." We don't have enough people and enough of a transition program to help sustain that at the home campus when they get thrown in with all the drama from the other kids. They don't know how to regulate on their own yet.

Jan: It's everyone's piece in the puzzle. The student was placed at DAEP and they will be coming back to the home campus. That's the goal, right? The students are only here [DAEP] for a certain amount of days then the student is going back to the home campus. The student learned the rules at DAEP and they can follow the rules here at DAEP. Then the home campus gets the student back and the counselors are supposed to support them. But that is not happening. The home campus is essentially just dumping them back in the same home campus environment and it's like, all right, go get them.

Frannie went on to make a comparison of how transition support is vital for people that have gone and been released from jail and why a similar structure of transition support needs to be implemented more on the home campus.

Frannie: It is a lot like being on probation from jail. When a counselor is working with kids that have been released from jail, the counselor is expected to transition them into after care. The follow-up with the kid begins on a weekly basis, then maybe you follow up with them once a month and so on. So, there's this whole safety net in place, towards that. The biggest mistake probably that you can do in that situation is regulate, regulate, regulate, and then let loose. Right? When a kid's court ordered for after care counseling, you don't just say, "Okay, well you have all this super intensive supervision and then you're done." The courts have a whole graduated step-down program with expectations and regulation and management of your own behavior. What is needed at the home campus is more of a check-in and check-up expectation. There needs to be a regulate and monitor situation.

One suggestion made in the counseling focus group would be to either modify the structure at the DAEP or the home campus to support the transitioning of students. It was mentioned the DAEP setting is very structured and tight when it comes to procedures and rules. Then the students finish their DAEP placement and are sent back to the home campus where the setting is much looser. As stated earlier by Frannie, the DAEP setting is intentional to regulate, regulate, and regulate, the students are released to the home campus where there is zero to little transitional supports or follow-up or the opportunity to manage what the students had learned at the DAEP.

The counselors feel one of two changes might support a transitional piece. They feel the DAEP should allow a slightly less structured environment on the campus for students that are nearing the end of their placement. Students need to re-immense gradually back into the home campuses.

This would allow students the opportunity to self-regulate and to test out what they have learned at the DAEP. The alternate option might be for the home campus to provide a much more structured environment, with positive relationships and check-in opportunities, when students first return and then gradually transition the students back into the traditional setting. Jackie gave an example of why this scenario might be needed.

Jackie: I think that transition process is needed because at DAEP, there are so many safety nets. The students' pockets are checked, they have a specific dress code, they go through metal detectors, they walk in a single file lines, they can't talk to anyone, there is so much structure. The students are basically told what to do all the time. They do not even have to think for themselves, with the exception of the academics of course. Then they're thrown back into their home campus environment. There needs to be another step between. There's so many safety nets, which is obvious like for their procedures and their safety here. But then, we also have to have some faith and accountability that they're going to carry that on.

While the counselors agree transition support to and from the DAEP is a non-negotiable, they also realize how difficult it can be to ensure it happens. Darla feels it takes efforts from both the home campus and the student themselves to make it work.

Darla: I'll just let you know that it's very hard for me to keep up with the students when they get back to the home campus because I have so many other kids. I feel like I'm not doing them justice when they get back to campus. I wish I could do more. I do always say, "I want you to come to my office." Usually I do check in with them. However, I'm not psychic. Students have to tell me when they are getting upset or need to come meet with me. Sometimes they've been put in groups in the past. This year my home campus has just not given me a chance to do groups.

April followed up with her struggles as well. She said, "I think I check in only two or three times for the same reason. I only have so much time. It's on me to check in on them. I do that and then I just go back into my regular routine with all the other students. Frannie told the group that she often meets with the family when they re-enroll at the home campus. She sits down with the family and student and tells them that she is glad they are back. Frannie says sometimes that is the first time she meets the parents. Frannie went on to say:

Frannie: If I have time, then I'll go take them into a conference room and say, "We're glad he's back and this is what we're going to do, and I'll check on them." I do check on them, but nowhere near what they need to smoothly transition in. Sometimes they're good and they'll say, "I'm overwhelmed today. I'm feeling overwhelmed. Can I come in your office?" I tell them that's what they need to do, and they do it, but like she said, they don't always do that.

Shirley pointed out similar struggles. She said that she cannot keep up with all of it.

Shirley: When I'm at DAEP meeting with the students on Fridays, they are my sole focus. I'm here for them as long as I need to. Then, when they get back [to the home campus] I'm the same way. I check on them when I see them in the hallways, in passing. I drop the ball too. I can't check on them because there's so much still going on at our campus.

Transitional supports for students were a primary area of concern for the counselors. They indicated there is a high need to for targeted supports prior to students leaving the DAEP. However, they were more concerned with the follow-up with students when they returned back

to their home campus, in regard to relationships, behavioral supports, and structure to increase the chances for them not to return back to a DAEP setting.

Data Analysis Findings

The findings of this research are intended to assist educational leaders in future practices to increase the effectiveness of DAEPs, ultimately reducing the recidivism rates on their campus.

In addition, to assist in answering the research questions, six a priori codes were selected and utilized throughout the data analysis process. The reference frequency of each a priori code within all data collected was tracked throughout the data analysis process by the QSR NVivo coding software. The frequency information listed in Table 5 is placed in order of the a priori codes most frequently referenced first.

Table 5

A Priori Code Frequency

A Priori Codes	Reference Frequency
Transition to and from the DAEP	256 references
Available Resources	220 references
Qualities and Purpose of a DAEP	218 references
Relationships at School	150 references
Social Learning	149 references
Structure and Format of DAEP	106 references

Transitional supports, counselor support and resources, changing student behavior, building relationships, and environmental factors surfaced as themes from the analyzed data.

The themes along with a brief description are:

- Transitional Supports–Providing supports to students while they transition from their home campus to the DAEP and back to their home campus.

- Counselor Resources–Providing results-proven resources to counselors so they can support students on a social, emotional, and behavioral level.
- Changing Student Behavior–Providing students with tools so they can make positive behavior choices in the future.
- Building Relationships–Providing opportunities to build positive and healthy relationships with adults.
- Environmental Factors–Understanding the influences of student behavior and the need for support when it comes to their peers and families.

In analyzing the data collected from the student interview, the photovoice project, and the counselor focus groups, five themes emerged which represent the overall perceptions of both the students and the counselors. The data analysis process also highlighted the interdependent relationship among all five themes in increasing the effectiveness of disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) in the Sunrise ISD. The relationships among the themes are illustrated in Figure 66.

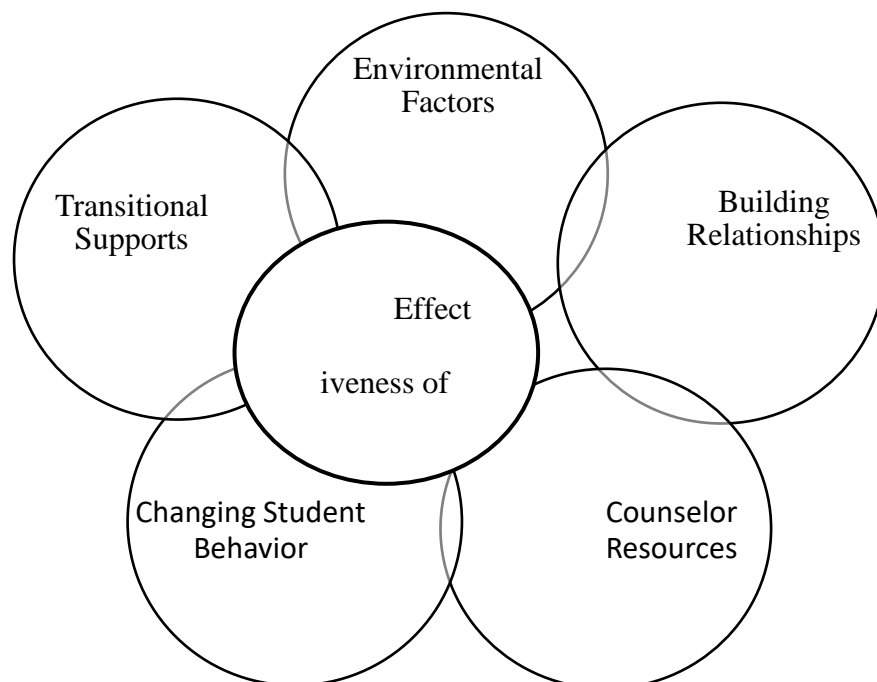


Figure 66. Relationships among the five themes revealed from the data analysis, regarding the effectiveness of the DAEP.

Each theme will be further discussed in the next two sub-sections: 1) alignment of themes to the collected data and 2) alignment of themes to the conceptual framework.

Alignment of Transitional Supports to the Collected Data

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need for transitional supports. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing supports to students when they returned back to the home campus.

Carlos (student) mentioned he feels positive connections with adults and transition support back at his home campus may have helped him make better choices preventing him from being reassigned to the DAEP. The majority of the students indicated they did not have enough counselor support before they were placed at the DAEP and again when they returned back to their home campus.

Many of the counselors were able to identify the need for transition during their viewing of the students' photovoice project and throughout the focus groups. The counselors, collectively, felt there needs to be some changes at the home campus first. There seems to be lack of transitional support (to and from the DAEP). The counselors noted the DAEP setting is intentional to regulate student behavior, but then the students are released to the home campus where there is zero to little transitional supports or follow-up or the opportunity to manage what the students learned while at the DAEP.

Jane (Director of Counseling) pointed out there is obviously a need to connect with students when they return to the home campus but fears "there's not a whole lot of time for transition for them [students] to come back where you can work with the whole team and work with the student. They [students] just go back like it was before." Rachel (counselor) noted the

transition piece needs to begin at the DAEP before students even get back to their home campus. She suggested a teacher from the home campus should visit their students at the DAEP to begin the transition supports and to build that relationship up again, so student do not come back with that anxiety and fear of dreading going back to their home campus. In addition, Rachel(counselor) identified a need for the home administration to visit their students at the DAEP from time to time. She said it was “not enough that the only person visiting them is a student assistance counselor.”

Lastly, to align the findings in regard to the need for transitional supports, the counselors indicated there is a high need to target supports for students prior to them leaving the DAEP. However, they were more concerned with follow-up with students when they returned back to their home campus, regarding relationships, behavioral supports, and structure, and they feel it a must for any child to have a chance in not returning back to a DAEP setting.

Alignment of Counselor Resources to the Collected Data

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need for counselor support and resources. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing holistic counselor supports to students while at the home campus and while at the DAEP. Counselor resources fell into four sub-categories: getting to the root of the problem, targeted intervention, variety of methods, and lack of supports at the home campus.

Jane (Director of Counseling) mentioned that part of the reason students come back to a DAEP is because the school system never identified the root cause of the problem. Jane said, “if a kid is using drugs and alcohol, chances are there’s some underlying mental health disorder or trauma.” Stella (counselor) agreed with Jane, adding that many of the students need support with

dealing with stress and anxiety first. She mentioned in her experiences, a lot of the students that do not know how to handle stress and anxiety tend to get into other trouble later, such as drugs, fighting, and anger management. Stella said, “students just do not know how to cope and deal with all the stuff that they go through.”

Once the root cause of the problem is identified, counseling should focus on individual factors (such as substance abuse, mental health, or social disorders), academic factors, and family factors. The counselors noted there were not enough targeted interventions for student misbehavior. For example, there needs to be drug and alcohol awareness counseling for students that are involved in either drugs or alcohol. There needs to be anger management support for those with anger issues. There needs to be targeted support for students getting in trouble for online social media reasons, etc. The counselors are hopeful that with more of a targeted intervention, students will get the support they need, resulting in less reoccurrences of the same misbehavior. Sasha (student) also agreed, she feels more targeted interventions are needed such as providing more social, emotional, and drug counseling.

The counselors agreed positive behavioral supports are essential as well. They mentioned the counselors must have a variety of interventions to choose from since there is no one method that will work for every child. For example, Frannie (counselor) said she “pulls from all different kinds of theories in order to be effective in working with kids, especially kids that come here [DAEP].” She went on to mention that one philosophy does not fit for all students. Stella agreed and says she differentiates between theoretical orientation and philosophy and uses a range of styles and techniques to support her students and families. Stella attacks all problems with a holistic approach. April agreed and said counselors really do need to support students in a more holistic fashion. She states, “I would say, our role as a counselor is to

provide extra support for students who may be struggling socially and emotionally because it's affecting their academic success.

Many of the students said the home campus counselors were a big support while they were at the DAEP. Luis (student) stated the DAEP personally helped him change his behavior by pushing him to become a better person and making him see what life is supposed to be. He continued to say the DAEP helped him "clean up the bad things in his life." Oscar (student) mentioned his counselors gave him a dream and a plan for the future. Another student, Peter, said the counselors helped him by telling him things such as what he is doing is taking him down the wrong path. Peter also feels students have a long road ahead of them to look back at the mistakes and realize where the trouble started with hopes of avoiding it in the future. He said the DAEP can help students, but they must want to make that decision. Sasha said that her counselors helped her build new and better behavior while at the DAEP. Shirley (counselor) went on to agree by noting the positivity in the students' photos. She stated, "you can definitely see the positivity . . . and being able to see a way to change, or follow the right path, there was kind of a theme of that too."

The counselors, collectively, feel that there needs to be some changes at the home campus first in regard to the lack of positive behavioral supports, at least for the students that tend to have repeat placements at the DAEP. They feel there needs to be counseling resources and targeted interventions available that can be used before students are placed and even more so if a student is placed at the DAEP. Darla (counselor) and Shirley (counselor) voiced their concern: Darla: "I feel specific interventions need to happen at the home campus before students are even sent to DAEP. And then even more if they [students] are sent to DAEP for those specific reasons they are sent."

Shirley (counselor): Here [DAEP] it's set up where their needs are met, and they can be successful, and then when they leave, it's not the same. It is as if they have figured out DAEP, but not sure how to transfer what they have learned to their home campus or they do not have the right supports or environment to be successful at their home campus.

In addition, the counselors feel that it is difficult to perform all the tasks that need to be done effectively with the DAEP students. Many of the counselors feel the lack of time, staff, and resources provided districtwide is of concern. Darla (counselor) feels there is not enough support staff. She stated, "I mean obviously one person can't do it all".

Most of the students said there was not enough counselor supports when the students returned to the home campus. Peter (student) would like more support where the counselors check in with students more often at the home campus. Tony feels that having the counselors check up on him more often might help. Xavier (student) stated, "I think over there [home campus], they should also do some group counseling like they do over here [DAEP]." Darla (counselor) said that is the role of a counselor, to reach out to the students. She states, "a lot of students don't like asking for help. We need to let them know that asking for help does not mean you're weak. It actually takes more strength to ask for help." Susan (counselor) agreed and added the students need to know adults are willing to reach out to them to see if they are doing well, because it lets students know adults really do care. Susan then went on to say it is as simple as saying, "Are you okay? How are you doing?"

Alignment of Changing Student Behavior to the Collected Data

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need to change student behavior. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing opportunities and supports to students so they can change behavior and not be sent back to the DAEP in the future.

Shirley (counselor) mentioned the main purpose of a DAEP is to support and encourage students to change their behavior, regardless of what their present problem is. Jane (Director of Counseling) stated the role of the counselor is to use best practices to support student by removing their barriers to success. She went on to say “it’s having the belief that all kids can improve. All kids can change. All kids are good. All kids are capable of moving forward.” Darla (counselor) agreed by noting the purpose of the DAEP is to provide skills to students to allow them to change behavior on a long-term basis. According to the counselors, success at a DAEP is when a student returns to their home campus and never returns back to a DAEP. This would mean the student’s behavior changed for the better.

Carlos (student) feels some students learn from their DAEP experience and that is why they do not come back to a DAEP. He went on to say, “some students really do learn that it is easier to do the right thing and that sometimes we do not get into trouble because it is the right thing to do.” Isaac (student) feels his current placement will create a change in behavior for him. Isaac feels lifting weights is similar to the purpose of the DAEP because lifting weights makes people stronger and attending a DAEP makes people stronger too. He said, “when people are stronger, they make better choices.” Isaac said, “it is the support that the adults give that makes a difference.” Labron (student) feels the support he has received at the DAEP has helped him make changes because the DAEP staff expects more respect from students than his home campus staff does. Luis (student) says that the DAEP is supposed to help students think about what they are doing, stay away from problems, and control their anger. He stated the DAEP personally helped him change his behavior by pushing him to become a better person and making him see what life is supposed to be. Luis said he has a better attitude now and the DAEP made him realize that he needs school to be successful. He now feels he is a good person and appreciates

all the support the staff has given him. Lastly, Sasha (student) said the DAEP allows students to make good choices so that students' behavior increases.

The counselors note there is a lack of success when it comes to changing student behavior, evidenced by the fact that some students return to a DAEP. Shirley (counselor) was concerned because if the students can see a way to change by following the right path, then why have the students not used what they have learned at the DAEP and transferred their good behavior over to their home campus. The counselors feel that many of the students' needs are met at the DAEP and they can be successful at the DAEP. However, their needs may not be met at the home campus. Student behavior changed while at the DAEP but, students are not sure how to transfer what they have learned to their home campus or they do not have the right supports or environment to be successful at their home campus. Another concern presented by the counselors on why there is not enough student change of behavior may have to do with the length of placement to the DAEP. A shorter placement may not allow enough time for the counselors to provide support that can be sustained.

In addition, consideration needs to be taken in regard to the reason a student's behavior might change for the better. During the study, some of the students indicated the reason they believe the DAEP creates change in students is not because of all the support, rather because some students simply do not want the consequence of losing social time with peers, having to wear a certain dress code, following the strict rules and procedures, waking up early, or missing out on home campus activities. For example, Carlos (student) said "there might be students who might be like, Oh no. The school was too strict. I don't want to go back there." Isaac (student) confirmed by saying students would not want to come back to the DAEP because there is a lack of communication with other students. Isaac said, "there is no social life here and you gotta be

independent at all times.” Lastly, Phil (student) said, students’ behavior may change, but for different reasons for different people. Some people only change for the better while they are at the DAEP simply, so they can get out of the DAEP and get back to their home campus as fast as possible. He is not sure the change in behavior is permanent. Xavier (student) feels there is nothing the school can do to support behavior change. He feels the change in people must be self-motivated.

Lastly, during the focus group interview, the counselors were asked why some students’ behavior does not change for the better when they return to the home campus. Jan (counselor) said she is concerned because she feels some students just want to come back to the DAEP. She says her students tell her all the time they like the DAEP because of the structure, the ability to focus, the relationships with the teachers, and the lack of student drama. Jane (Director of Counseling) said it “sounds like a lot of the students want to come back to DAEP because the process and procedures allow the students to stay focused on their academics and their grades go up.”

Alignment of Building Relationships to the Collected Data

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need to build positive relationships. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing opportunities for students to build and maintain positive relationships among staff at the home campus and at the DAEP.

The counselors agreed it is essential that there are positive relationships among staff and students at the home campus and at the DAEP. Jan (counselor) feels the students are crying out for positive student-teacher relationships. She states, “I think that the pictures are saying ‘I want

some actual relationships here at DAEP and at the home campus.” Jane (Director of Counseling) also mentioned students, in general, need structure and relationships. She states, “a lot of them [students] miss the social part, but it sounds like they still are appreciative of this structure. They [students] definitely crave both the structure and the relationship it seems.”

Darla (counselor) mentioned the most important thing a counselor does is to build rapport with that child.

Darla (counselor): If they don’t trust me, I’m not getting anywhere with them. I’m not going to get any information. Then, especially kids from the DAEP, you do have to genuinely believe in them or they’ll feel that you’re just saying what everyone says. “Oh, you can do it, buddy.” Without that trust, you’re not going to get anywhere with them. I’ve noticed that when they do come to DAEP and they come back they’re like, “Oh, I’m so sorry I disappointed you.” You’re just reassuring them that they’re not a disappointment. Those things are very important.

Susan (counselor) added that so much of the counseling is all about the relationship counselors have with the students. She says relationship building is the key to trust and success. She then added that once the relationship is built, then, and only then, can counselors piece things together to figure out what is going to work in a particular situation for a particular student.

In addition, the counselors felt the staff at the DAEP really seem to care about the students. Susan (counselor) reported that one thing the teachers here at the DAEP do is brag on the students in front of the home campus counselor. Susan says, “I see my kids just light up. You just see this look on their face.” In addition, some teachers can still be playful with the students and that is something that they do need. Teacher cannot be serious all the time.

However, the positive relationships among staff and students at the Sunrise DAEP has caused some concerns. A lot of the students do not get the same positive interaction at their home campus, resulting in students wanting to stay at or come back to the DAEP.

Susan (counselor): The students like the attention they get from the teachers here [DAEP]. It means a lot to those kids. Because they feel like they don't get that at their home campus. It becomes very hard to balance what is done at this DAEP. DAEP administration cannot afford to make this place not a loving, secure, caring place, so they don't wanna be here. Because they need that. So, I feel like, my opinion, the problem is more with the home campus, than here [DAEP]. You know, how do we get the home campus teachers to see that being more caring and having more structure on the campus is needed?

Jan (counselor) is also concerned because she feels students just want to come back to the DAEP. She says her students tell her all the time they like the DAEP because of the structure, the ability to focus, the relationships with the teachers, and the lack of student drama.

However, while the counselors agree transition support to and from the DAEP is a non-negotiable, they also realize how difficult it can be to ensure it happens. Darla feels it takes effort from both the home campus and the student themselves to make it work.

Darla (counselor): I'll just let you know that it's very hard for me to keep up with the students when they get back to the home campus because I have so many other kids. I feel like I'm not doing them justice when they get back to campus. I wish I could do more. I do always say, "I want you to come to my office." Usually I do check in with them. However, I'm not psychic. Students have to tell me when they are getting upset or need to come meet with me. Sometimes they've been put in groups in the past. This year my home campus has just not given me a chance to do groups.

Carlos (student) said that he really enjoyed his teachers at the DAEP. While his teachers expected him to follow all the rules, most of them really seemed to care about him. He said his teachers help each student on an individual level. Luis (student) was asked to describe his teachers at his DAEP. Luis said, "I love my teachers." They really understand him and actually want to see him change. He said he was very thankful they were so helpful. Oscar (student) was asked to describe his teachers at his DAEP. He stated they were nice and helpful. He felt they would help him more than his home campus did because of the smaller classes and the one-on-one special education support they provided. Lastly, Victor (student) feels like he has learned much more while at the DAEP than at his home campus. Victor attributes this to his teachers;

they tend to teach more and seem more professional than they do at his home campus. He also mentioned his teachers at the DAEP are all business and do not invade his privacy.

The counselors were asked what they thought the home campus staff would feel is the purpose of this DAEP. Frannie feels some of the teachers would say the purpose of the DAEP is to simply remove the students from the campus.

Frannie (counselor): “Oh, get rid of them. Send them right over there. We cannot deal with that kid. He needs to go to DAEP.” It’s just like, “He doesn’t belong in our classroom.” It’s a dumping ground. When they’re so frustrated, it’s a dumping ground, in the moment, and I think what’s sad about it is that kid knows they’re not wanted. They may be hearing that at home and now they go to school and they know they are not wanted in the classroom.

Jan (counselor) echoed Frannie thoughts by saying that she has a group of boys she meets with consistently every week. These boys tell her that they feel like they have giant targets on their back and they are expected to fail when they go back to the home campus.

Jan (counselor): Every week we talk about the obstacles that they face and the choices. They’re all on the verge of giving up, again. Just because they feel like the system is broken and against them. This happens at the home campus and outside in the communities that they live and operate in on a daily basis. This is not just a DAEP issue. If we’re going to work on building relationships at DAEP, we need to work on building relationships with the home campus. There needs to be more of a bridge and it needs to go beyond just those in this room.

Labron (student) mentioned that he struggled at his home campus because there were a lot of teachers that pressure on him when he returned to his home campus from the DAEP. He felt they were stricter with him because he had already been to the DAEP. He felt he was now being targeted because of his past history and the teachers were waiting for him to misbehave. Isaac (student) mentioned he had concerns with building relationships with some of his teachers at the home campus because they make things hard for him. He felt they would not explain things to him and they would pick on him for no reason. Isaac mentioned his home campus “was

too big and had too many students” in his classes. Phil (student) said he struggled at his home campus because he would have problems with the teachers.

Phil (student): If I feel like they’re disrespecting me, I’m gonna disrespect them ‘cause I don’t like people getting on to me for things that I didn’t do. If they get on to me, I’ll talk back to them. It’s not just gonna be a one-day thing. If they don’t do something, I’m gonna keep being mean to them.

Lastly, Xavier (student) feels “some teachers focus more on themselves and how they’re feeling but don’t even think about how students may be feeling.” He also feels that “everyone’s [staff] judgmental, ‘cause they try to tell me I did so many things last year and this year. I’m like, just because you have heard my name before, it does not mean I am always doing something wrong.”

Alignment of Environmental Factors to the Collected Data

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need to address the environmental factors that influence behavior. The counselors noted the need to provide supports for students both at school and at home while the students shared consistent remarks regarding their family and friends.

The counselors came to consensus throughout the focus groups that parental support and the student’s family life played a factor in the success of the child. Jane (Director of Counseling) states, “you can’t teach Bloom’s taxonomy until you address Maslow’s hierarchy.” Jane went on to say that counselors are a support by helping students learn to understand their emotional needs and just build on their own emotional intelligence. Jane states, “if students are depressed or if they’ve got stuff going on at home, they’re not going to be able to learn”. Stella (counselor) could not agree more.

Stella (counselor): We're educating kids, but you can't teach a child that has severe depression or if their home life is falling apart. Going back to Maslow's hierarchy, if students don't know where dinner is coming from and if they are not getting those basic needs, we [counselors] must step in and help bridge that gap. We must all just work together. We just get to play one piece of that.

Rachel (counselor): At home, especially a lot of my DAEP students, they don't have the best family life. They need those core people at their home campuses or wherever they're at and they need those people to listen to them and relay to them that they are cared for.

In addition, counselors added the students are bringing their struggles at home to school with them. Frannie feels a lot of times when the DAEP has repeat offenders, it is because those repeat offenders are learning bad behaviors outside of the educational setting.

Frannie (counselor): The factors that contribute to that kind of recidivism, it's not something we're going to be addressing here [DAEP]. There's so many outside factors for that. It's way more environmental and familial. We may make an impact, but it's a tiny dent. When you have frequent fliers like that, that's a lifestyle issue.

Some of the counselors have experienced situations where the parents may be teaching or enabling bad behavior. One example presented during the counselor focus groups that one of her students was at the DAEP for doing drugs. It was later discovered that the parent was giving the student drugs to sell as a way to provide income for the family. In addition, it was said that sometimes parents teach their children things that result in bad behavior, but the student did not know it was wrong and not normal behavior.

Students are even hearing conflicting things at home. Shirley (counselor) says that she has some students tell that their parents will say things such as "why are you talking to a counselor? Are you crazy? What do you need to talk to them for?" Paislee (counselor) said the bad behavior becomes normal behavior because it goes back to the social learning part of things.

Paislee (counselor): Students have told me "hey, I'm going to watch this happening and I'm going to do it myself." I've had parents tell their kids, "this is what our family does. We all go to jail. I mean so you're going to do your time and there's no way out of it."

The counselors believe it is very difficult to control those outside factors. They get frustrated because they can work with the students eight hours a day at school. Frannie (counselor) states, “then the students go home to chaos and it just blows everything out of the water that we’ve done all day because of their home life.” Shirley (counselor) stated her frustration as well.

Shirley (counselor): I’m working on ways now that I can get the students to find the motivation to let them realize they can bring themselves out of that situation if they want to. They can identify with people that have maybe come from their background and made it out to where they go, “Oh, okay, so I don’t have to stay in trouble and do this because this is what my family did.”

The counselors agreed the students are battling their natural developmental stage and there’s too many relationships. Students need to be able to trust all the adults in the lives.

Many of the counselors feel there is a need to provide counseling to the parents. It was clearly stated it is not because the parents are not necessarily doing anything wrong, but they may not know how to support their child in times of need. Frannie (counselor) mentioned “it’d be great if we could do a parent component, just one night a week or something.” One of the struggles with supporting the families is getting the parents to come to counseling. Darla (counselor) mentioned it did not even matter whether the counseling was free or not. She said, “in many cases, both parents have two to three jobs each.” It was suggested by other counselors in the focus group that maybe the school district should bring the counseling to the families instead of having the families come to the school. It was also mentioned that maybe the DAEP could offer incentives to students, such as getting the length of placement reduced, if families would agree to counseling. Susan (counselor) asked if there was a way to make the family counseling services mandatory.

Susan (counselor): My population and my home campus parents that I try to work with, they won’t come. It doesn’t matter and that’s really sad for me to say, but it wouldn’t

matter if it was an incentive for their kid to get less days. They're not going to come because that takes from their time or it's something where they have one car and one parent works during the day and one works at night and there seems to be no way to get them to come.

Stella (counselor) feels that another purpose of DAEP is to provide structure in the students' lives. Not just at the DAEP, but also an opportunity where students can learn how to use structure and transfer what they learned to their home campus and to their home. She said, "anybody that's worked with kids know kids do well with structure. A lot of them don't get it at home and some need more. Some can handle more freedom than others."

Isaac (student) has a big family and lives with his mom, dad, and his sister and her children. His sister has four children and one on the way. He has an older sister that lives with her boyfriend. Isaac said that both of his sisters were sent to the DAEP in the past. He said he did have his phone taken away, but he was more disappointed because he lost something else. He lost the trust of his parents. Isaac said, "they do not trust me anymore."

Labron (student) lives with his mother and his brother and he tells me that his relationship with them is good. LeBron's father is "not around." Labron declined to go into more detail about his father. Labron's brother had already graduated from high school. His brother had also been assigned to a DAEP while he was in high school for fighting.

Peter (student) stated he had many absences at school because his sister would go and get his girlfriend and they would hang out at home all-day long.

Tony (student) lives with his mom and his older brother. Tony's older brother has been to this DAEP three times already. In fact, both Tony and his brother have been to the DAEP at the same time for both of Tony's placements. This time however, Tony was sent by his middle school, but his brother was sent by his high school. Two different schools, sending two siblings to the DAEP at the same time. In addition, Tony said there was nothing that made it hard for

him at his home campus. His poor behavior is because of the things he is doing outside of school that he brings to school. He then gets caught while at school. If he did not get caught at school, he would be successful.

Xavier (student) used to belong to a boxing gym, but was kicked out because he and his sister were messing around in the gym. He was taught growing up that boys should never hit girls. His sister kept on punching him repeatedly, so he decided to “drop” her. I asked what he meant by “drop” her. He said he hit her leg and pushed her and that was it. The gym had a zero tolerance with that behavior and kicked him out. Xavier says his parents are divorced, and he floats back and forth between them or he even stays with other family members or at a friend’s house. He states all his family members work and they are rarely at home. Xavier has a sister and half-brother. Neither sibling has gone to a DAEP. He said he really does not live at any specific house anymore, so they were not really able to give him consequences. Xavier told me the reason he is at the DAEP this time is, it is his mom’s fault because “because she’s the one to snitch on me, so I was like okay.”

During the counselor focus group, the counselors agreed that a purpose of the DAEP is to teach resiliency skills and coping skills, to learn how to face the adversities that they are going to face in life. Darla (counselor) said the majority of these kids are not learning these skills at home. The lack of skills plays a negative impact when it comes to students choosing positive peers to interact with. If students are not learning these skills, the school system will have to step in to provide supports. The counselors feel they do a good job working with students and peer relationships when they are at the DAEP. However, Susan (counselor) states a lot of the times problems occur when the students get back to the home campus because their negative relationship with their peers is way stronger than the relationship she created during counseling.

She can, to a certain extent, say, “think it through and let’s talk about it,” but those peers are just overriding.

Carlos (student) said that he likes the social side of school. Carlos started skipping much more often when he got to high school. He started getting bored of his classes towards the beginning of the school year. Then he figured out that a lot of people were skipping so he joined them. His skipping happened so often that his home campus decided to send him to the DAEP for the first time.

Isaac (student) said the reason for him coming back to the DAEP was simply for making bad choices and hanging out with the wrong crowd of people. One of Isaac’s photovoice project photos was of a stop sign (Figure 11). According to Isaac, he chose that picture because there’s always rules. He said “you see a stop sign, you gotta stop. And that made me think of DAEP because you gotta stop being bad, stop joining gangs, stop doing drugs, and stuff like that.”

Labron (student) said he does not like school and it started in kindergarten. He said that part he does not like about school is “when people like mess with you or distract you from doing your work.” He then added that the work itself was not the problem, but rather the people, the “social stuff.”

One of Luis’s (student) photovoice project photos was of a Do Not Enter sign (Figure 24). He said the DAEP made him think about the bad influences of people in his life. He does not want to be on the streets.

Oscar (student) mentioned the reason he is at the DAEP was because he hung out with the same people and they were a bad influence on him and he was acting in the spur of the moment and was “not thinking” when he misbehaved. In addition, he said it would also be helpful if the home campus would give him advice on how to stay away from the “bad friends.”

Alignment of Themes to the Conceptual Framework

As a component of the research, I further connected the possible codes and themes to my conceptual framework. The themes that were revealed from the data collected and analyzed for this qualitative study align with the components of the conceptual framework explained in Chapter 1 in a variety of ways. The specific alignment among the themes and conceptual framework components are highlighted in Table 6.

Table 6

Alignment of Themes to the Conceptual Framework Components

Theme	Aligned Conceptual Framework Components
1: Transitional Supports	Social Learning Theory, Restorative Justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.
2: Counselor Support and Resources	Social Learning Theory, Restorative Justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.
3: Changing Student Behavior	Social Learning Theory, Restorative Justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.
4: Building Relationships	Social Learning Theory, Restorative Justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.
5: Environmental Factors	Social Learning Theory, Restorative Justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

The findings of this study indicate all previously stated themes are focused on the intended outcome of improving the effectiveness of the DAEP, in hopes to reduce the recidivism rate. In addition, the five themes noted in Table 6 are in alignment with the conceptual framework's intended outcome as well. All three prongs of the conceptual framework aligned with all five of the themes revealed in this study. This study provided substantial findings through the voice of both the students that have personally experienced multiple placements in DAEP and from the counselors that serve those students.

The social learning theory (SLT) describes how information is absorbed, processed, and learned by an individual in regard to cognitive development, exposure to family and friends, and the development and management of behaviors (Bandura, 1971). Restorative Justice involves making things right. The goals of restorative justice are to repair harm and restore relationships, hold individuals accountable for their behavior, and to reduce, prevent, and improve harmful behavior (Mullet, 2014). Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is a counseling model that supports social competence and academic achievement, decision making, student behavior, and staff behavior (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Freeman (2012) suggested the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports because they are evidence-based, cost effective approaches shown to reduce the number of DAEP placements, and they improve student behavior and academic success. The participants' perceptions revealed the desire and the need to incorporate the three-prong approach of social learning theory, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports into the DAEP setting and again when students return to the home campus.

Summary

In this chapter, 12 students and 12 counselors, who participated in this qualitative study, shared their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Sunrise DAEP. The methods of data collections provided opportunities for rich discussion. The students participated in a photovoice project by taking five photos each of what the DAEP means to them. Additionally, each student shared the meanings of each photo and answered questions during a semi-structured interview. The experiences and backgrounds of each student included personal stories of their home life and experiences at their home campus and at the DAEP. The counselors participated in an exhibit

style session of the students' photos and a focus group. The initial reactions of the students' photos by each counselor and the counselors' individual counseling philosophies provided valuable insight to me.

The participants in this study provided suggestions on strategies and support systems that would reduce the recidivism rate at the Sunrise ISD DAEP.

Even though the students varied in grade and number of placements to the DAEP and the counselors varied in philosophies and years of experience, the perceptions by all participants of the effectiveness of the DAEP and suggestions for improvement were aligned. Chapter 5 includes an in-depth analysis of the themes as they relate to the literature review and the conceptual framework, along with the implications for educational leadership and recommendations for further work.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter 5, I reveal how the identified themes are connected to the reviewed literature. A discussion of the implications for action and recommendations for further research are presented in this chapter as well.

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth.

Research has shown that it has been difficult to evaluate whether DAEP programs successfully educate or reform students due to a limited amount of data (Moll, 2012). Perhaps the most critical conclusion reported by the state auditor is the finding that data are insufficient to show if alternative education even works (Cortez & Montecel, 1999). Therefore, I assessed the perceptions of 12 DAEP students that have had multiple placements to a DAEP and 12 secondary campus-based student assistance counselors that provide emotional and behavioral supports to DAEP students from Sunrise ISD regarding the effectiveness of their DAEP. Life experiences and the shared challenges of the students and counselors were vital to this study.

The findings and resulting themes regarding how district leaders and counselors can establish systems to increase the effectiveness of DAEPs to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth will support the examination of the research questions:

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism?

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat student assignments to DAEP?

The research questions were answered through data collected in the form of photovoice pieces, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, audio recordings, and field notes.

The analysis of data was conducted after the submission of the student photovoice projects after the student interview sessions, and after the two counselor focus groups. The audio recordings were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed to gain an initial sense of understanding and to establish possible themes generated by the participants. The photos, interviews, and focus groups provided rich data to analyze. Descriptive coding and thematic analysis were later used for analyzing data.

Discussion of Findings Related to the Literature

The literature reviewed for this study highlighted the need for an effective disciplinary alternative educational program that will provide positive supports, in order to reduce the recidivism rate for troubled youths. In addition, the literature reviewed provided examples of best practices for educational leaders to implement in the DAEP. The five themes that emerged from the a priori coding process include these components as well as others that were highlighted in the literature reviewed regarding DAEPs.

Alignment of Transitional Supports to Literature Reviewed

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need for transitional supports. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing supports to students when they returned back to the home campus. This aligns with the literature two-fold. The

Texas Legislative Budget Board identified two major concerns in regard to DAEPs across the state of Texas: the insufficient communication between the DAEP and the home campus and the absence of transitional programs upon return to the home campus (Carreon, 2013b). These failures heighten repeat misbehavior, leading to future life-altering consequences, such as recidivism, dropouts, and potentially the prison systems. Not only did the literature indicate there is a lack of transition support for the DAEP student, it also indicated why the need for transition was a requirement governed by the state and the transitional supports are evidence-based best practices for the success of students. According to the Texas Education Code §37.008 (2017), schools are required to adopt transition related supports (including activities and procedures) used to facilitate student assignment between alternative and regular programs. Transfer procedures can include follow-up activities to track students after returning to the regular campus. Furthermore, Chapter 103 of TEA's Commissioner's Rules Concerning Safe Schools states school districts must follow two transition-related standards (Texas Education Agency, 2010a). These standards include establishing a student transition timeframe and providing written and oral communication from the DAEP staff to the regular campus. According to McCreight (1999), two of the eight best practices reported by Texas superintendents for successful DAEPs included a goal of success once back on the home campus and the goal of non-return attendance to the DAEP. Powell (2003) noted two of the seven essential elements of success as areas of focus for alternative program leaders and home campus leaders included transition supports and a supportive climate.

Alignment of Counselor Resources to Literature Reviewed

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need for counselor support and

resources. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing holistic counselor supports to students while at the home campus and while at the DAEP.

The Texas Education Code (2017) and Levin (2005) maintain each DAEP must meet the educational and behavioral needs counselling to the students it serves. Some of the concerns are that when dealing with student discipline, the common practice has been to identify how disruptive the action is and how much punishment the student should get, which results in little understanding of the root cause of the misbehavior (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). The Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) agrees by stating funding for DAEPs can be used to support alternatives to punitive consequences “while getting to root causes rather than criminalizing student behavior” (Dignity in Schools, 2016, Para. 4).

According to Flower et al. (2011), it is essential to provides supports and resources that are “capable of producing convincing positive student outcomes” to students in an alternative education setting (p. 491). Flower et al. identified nine school-based interventions that will give DAEP students the best chance of being successful academically and behaviorally. Four of the nine interventions were tightly connected to counselor support and resources: positive methods to increase appropriate behavior, functional behavioral assessment, social skills instruction, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. The positive behavioral interventions and supports framework is a counseling model that supports social competence and academic achievement, decision making, student behavior, and staff behavior (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). This approach provides opportunities for teaching positive behavior and reinforcing healthy ways to resolve conflict. Flower et al. (2011) suggested “the use of the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework in DAEP settings as a means to improve student academic and social behavior within a systems change approach” (p. 490). These practices are

critical for use in alternative educational settings.

PBIS should also be used at the home campus both prior and after a DAEP placement. This service is a “team approach to supporting the student’s needs in school, home, and community” (Mullen & Lambie, 2013, p. 16). The wraparound approach should minimize misbehavior and recidivism and increase academic and behavioral performance. It is essential that a collaborative counseling support system is in place to support DAEP students holistically.

Alignment of Changing Student Behavior to Literature Reviewed

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need to change student behavior. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing opportunities and supports to students so they can change behavior and not be sent back to the DAEP again in the future.

The intent of DAEPs are to promote safer schools and to provide a place for students to get intensive social support, to allow students to function better in the regular setting, and to prevent school dropout (Carpenter-Abey et al., 2001). Students are assigned to DAEPs in the hopes of changing or managing the disruptive behavior (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). The role of school discipline should be to stop student misbehavior, teach positive behavior, and increase a healthier and more productive decision making (Mullet, 2014).

The emphasis on best practices must occur in the DAEP setting to ensure student success. Ultimately, these practices are to raise student achievement and change student behavior. According to Flower et al. (2011), effective practice for students in the DAEP settings is a practice that is “capable of producing convincing positive student outcomes” by increasing appropriate behavior (p. 491). Freeman (2012) suggested using social and emotional learning,

restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports to improve student behavior and academic success. These approaches provide consequences for misbehavior and emphasize taking responsibility for one's actions, while teaching positive behavior. As reported by ETR (2018), SLT is a valuable and effective tool for educators who want to assist their students in learning new skills. SLT also encourages the learner to gain positive attitudes about changing behavior.

In addition to SLT, the use of PBIS is essential in promoting behavior change in students. Flower et al. (2011) suggested "the use of the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework in DAEP settings as a means to improve student academic and social behavior within a systems change approach" (p. 490). The PBIS framework is a counseling model that supports social competence and academic achievement, decision making, student behavior, and staff behavior (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). These practices of supporting students to make positive behavioral changes are critical in alternative educational settings.

However, despite the intent of DAEP to reduce misbehavior, it has been difficult to evaluate whether DAEPs successfully educate or reform students in the first place (Moll, 2012). Perhaps the most critical conclusion reported by the state auditor is the finding that data are insufficient to show if alternative education even works (Cortez & Montecel, 1999). Mullet (2014) states that sometimes DAEPs can be counterproductive. Mullet stated the "negative emotional response to punishment, anger, or resentment, distracts the wrongdoer from the effects of his or her wrongdoing, the harm done to others, and thus no possible empathetic connection exists to prompt moral reasoning and deter future harm" (p. 157). Students that are removed from school as a punishment often present a reduction in commitment to learning, a decrease in academic achievement, and an increase in negative attitudes, which then leads to increased

recidivism rates (reassignments to a DAEP) (González, 2012; Mullet, 2014). The increase in recidivism would indicate the student behaviors are not changing at the rate the state would want.

Alignment of Building Relationships to Literature Reviewed

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need to build positive relationships. The participants in this study consistently shared the importance of providing opportunities for students to build and maintain positive relationships among staff at the home campus and at the DAEP.

Flower et al. (2011) and Carpenter-Aeby and Aeby (2012) identified the following as some of the school-based interventions that will give students the best chance of being successful academically and behaviorally: low student/teacher ratio, high structure, and a school-based adult mentor. Furthermore, Powell (2003) adds a supportive environment provided by staff is one of the essential elements of success in an alternative education programs.

Azzam (2007) states setting the stage for success for students include having educators making school more engaging, improving school culture, and ensuring students have an adult role model in the school.

According to McCall (2003), the main factors that lead students to dropping out include a lack of positive relationships with school personnel, enrolling in an alternative setting early in their schooling, and students that came from single family homes. When surveyed on why they dropped out, most students said they felt teachers did not care about them or they felt they were labeled as troubled students.

Alignment of Environmental Factors to Literature Reviewed

Findings from this study indicate there is a high need to address the environmental factors that influence behavior. The counselors noted the need to provide supports for students both at school and at home while the students shared consistent remarks regarding their family and friends.

Flower et al. (2011) and Carpenter-Aeby and Aeby (2012) identified school-based interventions that will give students the best chance of being successful academically and behaviorally: high structure and parent involvement. Furthermore, Powell (2003) adds that a supportive environment provided by parents is one of the essential elements of success in an alternative education programs. According to McCall (2003), two of the main factors that lead students to dropping out include enrolling in an alternative setting, students that came from single parent homes, and lack of parental support in their child's life. Parent involvement in the child's education is also stressed in a strong DAEP. Studies by Carpenter-Aeby and Aeby (2012) revealed many students have shown increased success at a DAEP when there is family support present.

SLT states learning is a cognitive progression that takes place in a social context which influence behavior (Tutorialspoint, 2018). Bandura (1971) indicated "in the social learning system, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experiences or by observing others" (p. 3). Therefore, a student's peer group can play a significant role in a student's misbehavior. Behavior is affected by structural factors as well as by social factors, such as social norms and peer influence (ETR, 2018).

Conclusions

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research study was to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth.

Based on the study results and the literature reviewed, in order to increase the effectiveness of the DAEP, so that the recidivism rate will decrease, is to create positive changes in students' behavior. More specifically, throughout the Sunrise ISD, the increase of transitional supports, the need for targeted counselor support and resources, the intentionality of building positive relationships, and careful consideration of the environmental factors are essential before, during, and after students are placed at a DAEP. The results of this study are intended to add to the research in hopes to assist educational leaders in providing support systems to ensure success for students, regardless of location.

Implications for Action

This research study was designed to give voice to the students that have had multiple placements at a DAEP and to the counselors that provided supports to them. In addition, this study was intended to review current practices at the DAEP to reveal practices that are effective and practices that need revision. The stories told by the students and counselors indicated that creating change in practices is necessary if school districts want to increase positive student behavior.

The voices in this study indicate the need of more support in order to create change. School officials may want to explore ways to increase the transitional supports to the DAEP, while at the DAEP, and from the DAEP. Both students and counselors feel students would

benefit if educators would continually check-in with students during all stages of transition. The study results revealed the need to review the current counseling program and the targeted intervention supports that are needed early on at the home campus, as well as at the DAEP. In addition, the results of this study indicate an increase in support for the families of the DAEP students may be needed. Throughout the study, the perceptions of both the students and the counselors indicate there is a need to increase positive relationships among students, staff, and peers.

Lastly, school districts may want to look deeper into why some students prefer the DAEP over the traditional school setting and what changes could be made to prevent the intentional misbehavior of students. Both student and counselors reveal this DAEP provides a structured environment where students can focus, increase their grades, feel safe, and be free from the “drama” of the traditional school setting. One counselor mentioned there may be a need for an “alternate, alternate” school where the structure looks similar to the DAEP, but where students can choose to go and not have to be in trouble first.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative study was to reveal the perceptions of the effectiveness of DAEP for secondary students that have had repeat assignments to DAEP through the eyes of students and counselors. My intent was to discover what school districts can do differently in the future to support an increase in student success. Future research that may extend this current research would be to study multiple districts, both large and small, throughout the state. This would provide additional insight to similarities and differences of practices and provide additional suggestions to increase the effectiveness of DAEPs across the state.

Further qualitative research could be proposed to examine elementary students that have had repeat assignments to the DAEP. This might provide insight on why students continue to have repeat placements early on in their schooling and provide valuable information for schools to provide effective supports early on to prevent future assignments to the DAEP, hopefully.

Further qualitative research could be proposed to examine high school graduates that had only had one DAEP placement during their entire school career. This would provide insight what worked at their DAEP, so they did not make future poor behavior choices, resulting in another DAEP placement.

Lastly, further quantitative research could be proposed to discover predictive elements in students that tend to lead a student to future DAEP placements. School districts would then be able to identify students early on and provide supports to them in hopes of preventing students from attending a DAEP in the future.

Concluding Remarks

The research questions served as a guide throughout this study; therefore, it is important that they are addressed specifically. The research questions were answered through the use of a student photovoice project, student semi-structured interviews, a photo reveal to the counselors, and two counselor focus groups. The responses to the research questions follow.

What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program? The data collected and analyzed from the students and the counselors of Sunrise ISD revealed that use or lack of use of effective strategies contributed to the success or failures of a DAEP. The intentional use of transitional supports, the targeted invention and increased counseling support for student and their families, and the

building up of positive relationships among staff and students were common qualities that were revealed throughout the study. However, the lack of these qualities resulted in decreased student success.

Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program? The data collected and analyzed from the students and the counselors of Sunrise ISD revealed students continued to make mistakes due to poor behavior choices due to a lack of transitional supports either at the home campus and/or at the DAEP, negative peer influences, or a negative environmental upbringing. It was also revealed some students prefer the DAEP over the traditional school setting.

How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism? The data collected and analyzed from the students and the counselors of Sunrise ISD revealed the use of targeted interventions and counseling support, along with building positive relationships among the home campus staff and the DAEP staff contribute to decreased recidivism. In addition, the learned strategies for student success must be sustained and supported throughout the transition back to the home campus.

What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat assignments? The data collected and analyzed from the students and the counselors of Sunrise ISD revealed there is currently a lack of resources at the Sunrise DAEP. Resources include, but not limited to, targeted intervention that connect with the student's misbehavior, time to support the students at the home campus and/or at the DAEP, and providing supports for the families of DAEP students.

Summary

Limited research exists in understanding why student continue to have repeat placements in a disciplinary alternative education programs. In this study, I examined the effectiveness of

the DAEP in reducing the rate of recidivism for troubled youth. The study revealed, through the eyes of 12 secondary students that have had multiple placements to DAEP and 12 counselors that support them, reasons for repeat placements and suggestions for strategies and supports to increase student success.

The findings highlighted the need in Sunrise ISD for increased transitional supports, the need for targeted counselor support and resources, the need for building positive relationships among staff, and the need to support positive peer influences and the family.

Texas Education Agency (2016) reported, on average, from school years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015, approximately 19% of students returned to a DAEP multiple times. This means 81% of the students, during the same time period, did not have a repeat placement to a DAEP. While this study was conducted with students who have had repeat placements to a DAEP, it is imperative to mention there have been students enrolled at the Sunrise DAEP that have never returned. This indicates the Sunrise DAEP was effective in providing supports, to eliminate the need for future DAEP placements for some students.

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<u>Date of Interview:</u>	<u>Time of Interview:</u>
<u>Student's Unique Study Code (ID):</u>	<u>Campus Unique Study Code (ID):</u>
<u>Student Grade:</u>	<u>Number of DAEP placements:</u>

The proposed descriptive qualitative research study endeavors to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth. We will use the following procedures to protect the confidentiality of your data. All study records (including any codes in your data) will be locked in a secure location with access only by researchers directly involved in this study. I have received the informed consent form from your parent. I would like you to sign this agreement before I proceed with the interview.

Beginning Prompt:

Thank you for taking time to talk with me today. I would like to record this conversation. This will help me go back and fill in my notes more accurately. Would it be okay if I audio recorded this conversation?

[Wait for affirmation. If the individual does not wish to be recorded, then make notes only during the interview.]

Great! The questions I am about to ask you today are related to your enrollment in your district's DAEP. Also, I am not looking for you to say anything specific. There are no right or wrong answers. I understand that you may not have answers to some of the questions I ask. So, feel free to be as honest as possible. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Semi-structured student interview questions:

1. Tell me about yourself? What grade are you in? (Background)
2. What do you like about school? (Background)
3. What do you not like about school? (Background)
 - a. When did you stop liking school and why? (Probe)
4. What is your relationship like with your mom, dad, stepparent, and each sibling? (Background)
5. What consequences did you receive at home for being assigned to DAEP? (Background)
6. How would you describe your teachers, counselors, and administrators at DAEP? (RQ 1)
7. Why did you commit an offense that lead you to be placed at DAEP even after you have already been to a DAEP? (RQ 2)
8. Are there any particular experiences that made it difficult for you to be successful at DAEP and your home campus? (RQ 1, 3, 4)
9. How did your DAEP counselors help you? (RQ 1, 3, 4)
10. Do you believe that DAEPs can help change behavior so that students can be successful both at DAEP and later while at your home campus? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
 - a. If so, how? (Probe)
 - b. If not, why? (Probe)
11. What can your DAEP do differently to assist you so that you can be successful so that you will not come back to DAEP? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
12. Where do you see yourself in two years, five years, and ten years from now? (Predictive)
13. How could your DAEP help you get there? (Predictive)

Research Questions

Below is the cross-referenced list of my research questions embedded in my semi-structured interview protocol.

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

Questions: 5, 7, 8, 9, 10

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

Questions: 6, 9, 10

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism? *Questions: 7, 8, 9, 10*

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat assignments?

Questions: 7, 8, 9, 10

APPENDIX B

STUDENT PHOTOVOICE PROMPT

<u>Date of Interview:</u>	<u>Time of Interview:</u>
<u>Student's Unique Study Code (ID):</u>	<u>Campus Unique Study Code (ID):</u>
<u>Student Grade:</u>	<u># of DAEP placements:</u>

The proposed descriptive qualitative research study endeavors to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth.

Students will submit 5 pictures for the 1 prompt listed below that they feel appropriately represents the prompt and how it applies to DAEP. Each student will be reminded that they will not be able to use human subjects in their photos and that any photo deemed inappropriate by the researcher will not be used in this study.

1. What does a Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP) mean to you? (RQ 1)

Research Questions

Below is the cross-referenced list of my research questions as they are embedded in my student photovoice prompt.

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism?

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat assignments?

APPENDIX C

COUNSELOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<u>Date of Interview:</u>	<u>Time of Interview:</u>
<u>Counselor's Unique Study Code (ID):</u>	<u>Campus Unique Study Code (ID):</u>
<u>Counselor Grade Levels:</u>	<u>Number of years supporting DAEP students:</u>

The proposed descriptive qualitative research study endeavors to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth.

We will use the following procedures to protect the confidentiality of your data. All study records (including any codes in your data) will be locked in a secure location with access only by researchers directly involved in this study. I have an informed consent form to share with you (*hand the informed consent form to the individual*). I would like you to sign this agreement before I proceed with the interview.

Beginning Prompt:

Thank you for taking time to talk with me today. I would like to record this conversation. This will help me go back and fill in my notes more accurately. Would it be okay if I audio recorded this conversation?

[Wait for affirmation. If the individual does not wish to be recorded, then make notes only during the interview.]

Great! The questions I am about to ask you today are related to your experiences working with students that have had multiple placements in your district's DAEP. Also, I am not looking for you to say anything specific. There are no right or wrong answers. I understand that

you may not have answers to some of the questions I ask. So, feel free to be as honest as possible. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Counselor focus group questions:

1. Please describe your role as a student assistance counselor in your school district.
(Background)
2. What is your counseling and your educational philosophy? (Background)
3. What do you feel is the purpose of a DAEP? (Background)
4. How does the DAEP program in your district measure up to its purpose?
(Background)
5. To what extent do you think administrators, teachers, students, and parents agree on this purpose? (Background)
6. What are the strengths of your DAEP? (RQ 1)
7. What are the weaknesses of your DAEP? (RQ 1)
8. What do you think is the most important characteristic of a DAEP school counselor?
(RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
9. What should a successful DAEP look like? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
10. Why do you think students have repeat discretionary placements to DAEP? (RQ 2)
11. What have been your past interactions with students with repeat placements? (RQ 2)
12. How do you characterize the relationships between the students and counselors at your DAEP? (RQ 2, 3, 4)
13. What counseling strategies would you suggest to help DAEP students succeed? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
14. What has been your role in assisting the transitioning of students to and from DAEP?
(RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
 - a. What were some of the successes and challenges? (Prompt)
15. What professional development opportunities have you attended to specifically target students at DAEP? (RQ 4)
16. What counseling strategies would you suggest to help DAEP students succeed?
(RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)

17. What changes could be made at your DAEP that could improve student successes?
(predictive)

Research Questions

Below is the cross-referenced list of my research questions as they are embedded in my counselor focus group interview protocol.

RQ1: What are the qualities in a disciplinary alternative education program setting that lead to either success or failure of a DAEP program?

Questions: 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15

RQ2: Why do students continue to commit offenses which lead to multiple assignments in a disciplinary alternative education program?

Questions: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15

RQ3: How does a disciplinary alternative education program provide a restorative environment for troubled youth in order to decrease recidivism?

Questions: 7, 8, 12, 13, 15

RQ4: What resources are available to reduce the amount of repeat assignments?

Questions: 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15

APPENDIX D

FACE-TO-FACE RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR STUDENTS

DAEP Counselor will initiate the recruitment

I am approaching you to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study that Mr. Dunworth is conducting for his dissertation at the University of North Texas about the effectiveness of discipline alternative education programs (DAEPs) and suggestions that could be made in hopes of reducing repeat student placements to DAEPs.

Your present and past DAEP placements would directly add to his study. Your role as a student with multiple DAEP placements will allow him to gain your perspective on the current effectiveness of DAEP and hopefully provide him with suggestions that might increase future student success in hopes of reducing future placements.

Your involvement would require you to participate in a 30-60-minute face-to-face interview with him and the opportunity to be involved in a photovoice project. The photovoice project would involve you taking five pictures based on five prompts that he will give you regarding success and/or failures of DAEP. You would then need to spend an additional 30-60 minutes doing a follow up interview so that he can discuss your pictures with you.

You may opt out of the study at any time. If you agree to participate in this study, a notice and consent form will need to be signed by your parent and yourself. Please know that all information will be kept confidential. Would you be interested in participating in this study?

If you are interested in participating in this study, please let me know so that I can contact him about your willingness to participate in his study.

APPENDIX E

UNT IRB INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR MINORS (AGES 7-17)

Before agreeing to your child's participation in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Student and Counselor Perceptions of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Effectiveness.

Student Investigator: Rodney (Buddy) Dunworth, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Teacher Education and Administration.

Supervising Investigator: Dr. Karthigeyan Subramaniam

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study to reveal the reasons why students return to Discipline Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) in hopes of identifying educational strategies to support the efforts in decreasing the number of students going back to a DAEP.

Study Procedures: Your child will be asked to participate in a face to face interview about their past experiences of successes and/or struggles that they have had while attending DAEPs. The interview session will take place on the DAEP Campus and will take approximately 30 minutes of their time. The interview will be audio recorded, submitted for professional transcription, and this data will be analyzed by the researcher. These records will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted.

Your child will also be asked to participate in a photovoice project where they will be asked to take five pictures (camera will be provided) based on five prompts about their past experiences of successes and/or struggles that they have had while attending DAEPs. The taking of pictures will take approximately 30 minutes and will be done during non-school hours and off school grounds. Please note that each student will be reminded that they will not be able to use human subjects in their photos and that any photo deemed inappropriate by the researcher will not be used in this study. The follow up photovoice interview with the researcher will take place on the DAEP Campus and will take approximately 30 minutes of their time. The interview will be audio recorded, submitted for professional transcription, and this data will be analyzed by the researcher. These records will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted.

Foreseeable Risks: No foreseeable risks are involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: We expect the project to benefit your child by assisting school leaders in learning more about how discipline alternative education programs might be able to operate in a more effective manner to reduce the return rate for students back to DAEP.

Compensation for Participants: None

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: The confidentiality of your child's individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study. Names of participants and schools will not be used; pseudonyms will be assigned to

protect identities. Please note that confidentiality will need to be breached if your child discloses or reports any child abuse. All records and information will be kept on a remote storage device and locked in the office of the Supervising Investigator. As per federal regulations, the research participants' information will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted, destroyed, or shredded.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Buddy Dunworth @ rodneydunworth@my.unt.edu or Dr. Karthigeyan Subramaniam at karthigeyan.subramaniam@unt.edu.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-4643 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Rodney (Buddy) Dunworth has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to allow your child to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your child to participate or your decision to withdraw him/her from the study will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your child's participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant and you voluntarily consent to your child's participation in this study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian_____

Date

For the Student Investigator or Designee: I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the parent or guardian signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the parent or guardian understood the explanation.

Signature of Student Investigator_____

Date

Child Assent Form

You are being asked to be part of a research project being done by the University of North Texas Department of Education.

This study involves participating in a research study to reveal the reasons why students return to Discipline Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) in hopes of identifying educational strategies to support the efforts in decreasing the number of students going back to a DAEP.

You will be asked to participate in a face to face interview about your past experiences of successes and/or struggles that you have had while attending DAEPs. The interview session will take place on the DAEP Campus and will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. The interview will be audio recorded. These records will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted.

You will also be asked to participate in a photovoice project where you will be asked to take five pictures (camera will be provided) based on five prompts about you past experiences of successes and/or struggles that you have had while attending DAEPs. The taking of pictures will take approximately 30 minutes and will be done during non-school hours and off school grounds. Please note that you will not be able to use human subjects in your photos and that any photo

deemed inappropriate by the researcher will not be used in this study. The follow up photovoice interview will take place on the DAEP Campus and will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. The interview will be audio recorded. These records will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted.

If you decide to be part of this study, please remember you can stop participating any time you want to.

If you would like to be part of this study, please sign your name below.

Printed Name of Child_____

Signature of Child _____

Date

Signature of Student Investigator_____

Date

APPENDIX F

FACE-TO-FACE RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR COUNSELORS

I am approaching you to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study I am conducting for my dissertation at the University of North Texas about the effectiveness of discipline alternative education programs (DAEPs) and suggestions that could be made in hopes of reducing repeat student placements to DAEPs.

Your involvement with students that have had multiple DAEP placements would directly add to my study. Your role as a student assistance counselor that provides direct supports to students with multiple DAEP placements will allow me to gain your perspective on the current effectiveness of DAEP and hopefully provide me with suggestions that might increase future student success in hopes of reducing future placements.

Your involvement would require you to participate in a 30-60-minute focus group interview with other student assistance counselors and myself at your district's DAEP.

You may opt out of the study at any time. If you agree to participate in this study, a notice and consent form will be signed, and all information will be kept confidential. Would you be interested in participating in this study?

Sincerely,

Buddy Dunworth

APPENDIX G

UNT IRB INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Student and Counselor Perceptions of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Effectiveness.

Student Investigator: Rodney (Buddy) Dunworth, University of North Texas (UNT)
Department of Teacher Education and Administration.

Supervising Investigator: Dr. Karthigeyan Subramaniam

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study to reveal the reasons why students return to discipline alternative education programs and to identify effective practices so that discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth.

Study Procedures: You will be asked to participate in a focus group about your experiences of working with students that have had multiple placements to discipline alternative education programs and your perceptions of the effectiveness of discipline alternative education programs. The focus group session will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. Focus groups will be audio recorded, submitted for professional transcription, and this data will be analyzed using pre-set categories to determine themes, if any exist. These records will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted.

Foreseeable Risks: No foreseeable risks are involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This study may not be of any direct benefit to you; but we hope to learn more about how discipline alternative education programs can operate in a more effective manner in order to provide a restorative learning environment in hopes to decrease the recidivism rate for the students it serves.

Compensation for Participants: None

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: The confidentiality of your individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study. Names of participants and schools will not be used; pseudonyms will be assigned to protect identities. All records and information will be kept on a remote storage device and locked in the office of the Supervising Investigator. As per federal regulations, the research participants' information will be maintained for three years and then will be deleted, destroyed, or shredded.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Buddy Dunworth @ rodneydunworth@my.unt.edu or Dr. Karthigeyan Subramaniam at karthigeyan.subramaniam@unt.edu.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-4643 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights:

Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Rodney (Buddy) Dunworth has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date

For the Student Investigator or Designee:

I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the subject signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the participant understood the explanation.

Signature of Student Investigator_____

Date

APPENDIX H
PHOTOVOICE HANDOUT

The proposed descriptive qualitative research study endeavors to examine how discipline alternative education programs can operate at a more effective level in order to provide a restorative environment, resulting in a decreased recidivism rate for troubled youth.

Students will submit 5 pictures for the 1 prompt listed below that they feel appropriately represents the prompt and how it applies to DAEP. Each student will be reminded that they will not be able to use human subjects in their photos and that any photo deemed inappropriate by the researcher will not be used in this study.

1. What does a Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP) mean to you?

Send all 5 pictures to [bdunw\[REDACTED\]@dentonisd.org](mailto:bdunw[REDACTED]@dentonisd.org)

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